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Socio-cultural integration of highly educated Eritrean migrants in the UK

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SOCIO-CULTURAL INTEGRATION OF HIGHLY EDUCATED ERITREAN MIGRANTS IN THE UK

By

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ABSTRACT

Located at the intersection of the fields of globalisation, migration and education, this study focuses on the socio-cultural integration of highly educated Eritrean migrants in the UK. The purpose of the research is to provide critical analyses of the lives of the migrants in their host country, with specific reference to their aspirations, challenges and strategies. Twenty-four highly educated Eritrean migrants participated in the study, with the findings presented in three interrelated chapters (Chapters Five, Six and Seven). The research shows that my participants are what Bauman calls 'vagabonds' who leave their country due to inhospitable circumstances. They reach their final destination following a long, costly and risky route, hoping to be granted asylum and start their lives anew within a very short time. However, delays in decisions over their asylum applications, the cultural differences they find between their lives in Eritrea and the UK, and the loneliness they face in their host country make them vulnerable, leading to anxiety and psychological distress. The participants of my study were all awarded refugee status and, therefore, indefinite leave to remain. Yet, the educational qualifications and language skills they hold are considered insufficient in the UK. Hence, they use their educational qualifications to gain additional knowledge, skills and experiences, which help them to integrate to their host country. Most of them go back to college to obtain a UK qualification, and opt to volunteer in various institutions to gain work experience in the UK. The findings also put family at the centre of the socio-cultural integration of the migrants and point that there is a close relationship between migration, family formation/relationships, and socio-cultural integration. This manifests in different ways -- both during and after migration. As indicated, the 'vagabonds' in many cases flee their country, leaving their family behind. In addition, Eritrean traditional culture and the migrants' educational qualifications have significant effects on family formation and gendered relations.

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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

> I tell my story, not because it is unique, but because it is not. It is the story of many girls. Today, I tell their stories too. (Malala Yousafzai, Nobel Lecture 2014 Peace Prize)

1.1 Introduction

This study explores the experiences of 'highly educated' migrants, a term used here to refer to those who have completed a higher education degree (see further in the next chapter). The main purpose of the study is to understand the socio-cultural integration of Eritrean migrants in the United Kingdom (UK) with a focus on those who completed their undergraduate university education in Eritrea, before migrating. Being aware of the contested notion of integration, I define integration as embracing cultural diversity without having to lose one's personal identity (Fokkema & de Haas, 2011; Gray, 2006; Ward & Kennedy, 1999). This chapter presents a general overview of my study. First, I briefly present my personal note that led to the conception of this study. I then turn to discuss the factors that influenced my decision for choosing this particular topic and the research questions. Next, I highlight the need for this study at local and international levels. Furthermore, this chapter addresses the research objectives and questions. Finally, I state the organisation of the study.

1.2 A Personal Note

I believe that the question 'who am I' is not only a fundamental issue for self-enquiry or self-discovery, but it is also a basis for what many people aspire to do. I could say that I am not different. My experiences have a great effect on my daily life including the way I think,

associate with others and even feel. To return to the question, I am an outcome of my life trajectories constructed through different socio-cultural, economic, political, academic and other factors. Among many, I am a highly educated Eritrean migrant currently living in the UK. This sentence has many components: my educational level, nationality, status and location. It shares some common characteristics with my study in general and my participants in particular. I was born in Asmara, Eritrea, in a time when the Eritrean liberation movement was at its highest stage. At the same time, the Ethiopian government was imprisoning and killing Eritreans who were suspected of supporting the liberation movement. The war caused human and material losses, including my father and some other close family members. Many also left the country and migrated to different countries to escape the unwarranted detention, killing and other human rights abuse from the Ethiopian government. Finally, the war ended in 1991 with Eritrea becoming an independent state.

Upon completion of my secondary school, I joined the University of Asmara in 1998, the only university in the country at that time. During my undergraduate study, two of the main events that affected university students were the Eritrea-Ethiopia border conflict (1998-2000), and the imprisonment of the University students in 2001(see Chapter Two for more). In 2000, the border conflict caused university students to go to military training to defend the nation. Fortunately, we returned to college after a month and a half because Eritrea and Ethiopia signed the Algiers agreement in June 2000 to end the conflict through international arbitration. However, soon after returning to study, the political situation of Eritrea started to change, with tensions arising within the government, and between the government and the University community. Consequently, in August 2001 the government arrested and imprisoned university students (including me) in Wi'a and Gelalo, eastern lowlands of Eritrea

where the temperature reaches about 45 degree Celsius, for opposing to participate in a summer work programme due to low pay on offer (BBC, 2001; Müller, 2008).

After four years of study and one year of university service, I graduated with a BA Degree in Education Administration (with distinction) from the Faculty of Education. Following my graduation, the University of Asmara recruited me as a Graduate Assistant based on my academic merit. The opportunity and challenge to be involved in different academic and administrative activities such as teaching undergraduate courses, and serving as the coordinator of the Extension and Distance Education programmes then cultivated an undying interest of pursuing my postgraduate study. I felt deeply that I needed further education to strengthen and accelerate my intellectual development as well as acquire further practical experiences. Accordingly, since there was no any post/graduate programme in Eritrea particularly in the field of education, in 2004 I started applying for master's degree programme to different foreign universities in Africa, Europe, the USA, Canada and Australia and got many admissions, some of them with full or partial scholarships. Nevertheless, I could not leave my work and the country to pursue my study because of the extended national service and exit visa restriction policy of the government of Eritrea. I have elaborated upon this and other issues concerning Eritrea in the next chapter.

In 2004/05, the government established seven Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to replace the University of Asmara. All the academic staff of the University were allocated to the newly established HEIs. Accordingly, in 2007 I was assigned to Eritrea Institute of Technology (EIT) and in 2008 reassigned to the National Board for Higher Education (NBHE). As a member of the Bureau of Standards and Evaluation (BS & E) of the NBHE, I continued to serve as the Coordinator of the Extension and Distance Education programmes.

Moreover, I became assistant to the Director of the BS & E in coordinating training, quality assurance and consultancy services of all the HEIs in Eritrea. BS & E is one of the three directorates of the NBHE. It is responsible for the consultancy services, extension (evening) programme, and academic quality and evaluation of all the HEIs in Eritrea. The BS & E is also in charge of the Eritrean Secondary Education Certificate Examinations (ESECE[1]) and the distance education programme of the country. Throughout this time, I never stopped applying for postgraduate programmes and getting various opportunities. However, I was not able to use any one of them because I could not get an exit visa to leave the country. After several challenges, in April 2013, the NBHE nominated me to study in China as part of the human resource development cooperation between the two countries. I used the opportunity to apply to Beijing Normal University, one of the top Chinese Universities, especially in the field of education.

In September 2013, I joined Beijing Normal University and started my master's programme in Educational Leadership and Policy (Comparative Education). In the first semester, I came across the work of Paulo Freire, Carlos Alberto Torres, Bell Hooks, Sandra Hale and many other critical educators, and felt that they were 'speaking to me'. In particular, the works of Freire's (2010), Hooks (2010) and Torres (2002) helped me to better understand the links between education and social, political and economic development of societies. Moreover, these texts improved my socio-economic and political awareness of Eritrea and the East African region. They also increased my research interest as I started to ask many questions concerning the poverty, conflict, corruption and human rights abuse in the region and other parts of the world. At the same time, I thought that identifying or naming the problems was not enough. I could imagine the feeling of powerlessness that many people experience for not

[1]ESECE is the national higher education entrance examination in Eritrea.

being able to solve the problems that arise in their country or society (see also Hale, 2007). It was my turn to feel that powerlessness, which also was a big challenge and, in some cases, frustrating. Finally, I decided to explore the contribution of education to social justice.

After continuous discussion with my supervisor at Beijing Normal University, I developed my master's thesis focusing on the role of higher education in nurturing global citizenship in Eritrea. I argued that, through critical pedagogy, HEIs can nurture students with a skill for global citizenship, regardless of their area of specialisation or the courses they take. My study concluded that, despite various challenges, Eritrean HEIs equip their students with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to be responsible global citizens (Tsegay, 2016a). This suggests that highly educated Eritrean migrants can live in peace and work together with people from different socio-cultural backgrounds.

Furthermore, in the second year of my master's study, I started to look for doctoral programmes for two salient reasons. First, I had a plan to finish my doctoral study. Second, linking to a PhD programme was significant for me because I did not have to depend on my government's approval or exit visa permission to pursue my study. Therefore, I decided to prepare a research proposal for my application. In doing so, I started to reflect on my master's thesis, particularly on the issues that I could not cover due to time and budget constraints. The case of migrants or refugees had also caught my attention. It was common to hear or read about the flow and vulnerability of migrants in the news, and Eritreans were often on the top of the headlines. In fact, this was not new to me. I had lost close family members in the Mediterranean Sea on their route to Europe.

As an Eritrean who lived in the country for more than three decades, I had also witnessed many of my friends, classmates and neighbours leaving the country legally and illegally. Many of them migrated leaving their job or dropping out of education. I connected the ongoing migration scenario to my master's thesis suggestion for further study: how do the knowledge, skills and attitudes obtained in the Eritrean HEIs help those who migrate to other countries? There were few studies which indicated the significance of educational qualification to the socio-cultural and economic integration of migrants. For instance, Fokkema and de Haas (2011) indicated that highly educated migrants have better possibilities of socio-cultural integration than less educated ones. Nevertheless, as I have shown below, there was a need for further study on the role of educational qualification in the socio-cultural integration of migrants in their host countries.

To conclude, my personal trajectories were important precursors for igniting my interest in this research area. In addition, there were other factors which contributed to choosing the topic and research questions. The following section explains how and why I came to this research topic in general and the below-stated research questions (see Section 1.6) in particular.

1.3 How and Why Did I Come to Research This Topic?

As discussed above, my academic, work and personal experiences have increased my belief in education, including research, as the main tool to change the world. In fact, it is for this motive that I joined the PhD programme in Social Justice and Education at the University of Roehampton. Even though many research areas fall under this programme, my study focuses on the socio-cultural integration of highly educated Eritrean migrants in the UK. In addition to my personal trajectories and interest in theories of globalisation and education (see Tsegay,

2016a, 2019), the main reason for my focus on this research topic is mainly influenced by the outflow of migrants from different parts of the world in general and Eritrea in particular.

Migration has shown constant growth in the world for decades (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR] 2019). I define migration as the event of moving from one place to another (Kok, 1999). My emphasis in this thesis is on long-term international migration, a situation where migrants live in a country other than that of their birth for at least one year (Poulain & Perrin, 2001). As indicated above, I focus on Eritrean migrants. Eritrea is a country located in the Horn of Africa, with an estimated population of 5.3 million people (United Nations [UN], 2019). Thousands of youth crossed the border illegally and left Eritrea within the past two decades for socio-economic and political reasons. The UNHCR (2008, 2009, 2013a, 2015) reported that Eritrea was one of the top four countries of origin for asylum seekers. In 2016, the country was identified as one of the fastest emptying countries with about 4,000 Eritreans emigrating every month (Anderson, 2016; Bearak, 2016).

However, the government of Eritrea claimed that this figure is not correct. It argues that Eritrean refugees are given 'automatic' asylum which encourages citizens from neighbouring countries such as Ethiopia, Sudan and Somalia to claim as Eritreans (Bereketeab, 2016; Coppel, 2019). In line with this, the Austrian ambassador to Ethiopia, Andreas Melan, stated that 30 to 40 percent of the Eritrean asylum seekers in Europe are believed to be Ethiopians (TesfaNews, 2015). There is no evidence supporting these claims. However, it might be possible that refugees from other countries could use the situation in Eritrea to claim asylum (for example, see Yaron Mesgena, 2013). Yet, this does not change the fact that thousands of Eritreans are leaving the country.

Moreover, many people from other countries are experiencing migration and displacement for various reasons. Some are fleeing from repressive regimes or conflict zones while others are trying to escape economic hardship. By 2017, there were about 68.5 million displaced people in the world, out of which about 25.4 million were refugees and 3.1 million asylum seekers running away from conflict and persecution (UNHCR, 2018). Whereas the remaining 40 million were internally displaced people. The number of forcibly displaced people rose to 70.8 million in 2018 -- out of which about 25.9 million and 3.5 million were refugees and asylum seekers, respectively (UNHCR, 2019). The UNHCR (2019) report further explained, 'nearly one person is forcibly displaced every two seconds as a result of conflict or persecution' in the world.

The Eritrean and international situations provide a strong case for researching migrants' condition before, during and after migration. The rapid outflow of Eritreans has triggered various studies to address the causes of migration (Anderson, 2016; Bearak, 2016; Hepner, 2015; Kibreab, 2013). Moreover, the outcry about Eritrean migrants' suffering and dying in Sina (Egypt) at the hand of human traffickers and the various shipwrecks that killed thousands on the Mediterranean Sea captured headline news and the attention of researchers (Arnone, 2008; Coppens, 2013; Nakash et al., 2015). Nonetheless, less consideration has been given to migrants' experiences in their host countries. By considering the Eritrean case, I explore the socio-cultural integration experiences of highly educated migrants in the UK. As shown below, the main research question is divided into three sub-questions to provide the skeleton around and find information to address the issue under study.

1.3.1 Listening to Unheard Voices

As Arundhati Roy in her Sydney Peace Prize Lecture 2004 said, ‘We know of course there's really no such thing as the 'voiceless'. There are only the deliberately silenced, or the preferably unheard’ (Roy, 2004). Refugees or migrants are often victims of hate crime, discrimination and other human rights violations. They also have been the subject of political debates for many decades. The 1968 Africanisation policy of Kenya and Enoch Powell’s infamous ‘Rivers of Blood Speech’ are two evident examples which labelled migrants as unwanted intruders (see Hansen, 2002; Powell, 1968). However, there is little research about migrants concerning their challenges, contributions and dreams.

The 21-year-old Nobel Prize laureate, Malala Yousafzai’s book (2019), *We Are Displaced*, is based on first-person accounts of the lives of girls that she met in refugee camps and settlements across the world. In her interview with *CBS This Morning* (2019), Malala noted that she wanted to include the stories of other refugees in her book because:

> We hear about refugees in the newspapers, on TV; and it is just in numbers; it is usually in a negative way. But we do not hear from them. We hear about them, but we do not hear what they want to say, and what their dreams and aspirations are. People do not know much about refugees and hear from them.

I share Yousafzai’s testimony. As I indicated above, there is often breaking news on refugees including Eritrean refugees/asylum seekers (see Anderson, 2016; Bearak, 2016; Taylor, 2019). It is alarming to hear that a country with a small population has become one of the world’s top source countries for asylum seekers. This leads to the question of ‘why are these people leaving their country’. In fact, beyond listening to refugees’ voices, this question is

significant to understand whether those individuals are refugees or economic migrants because host countries depend on such information to grant asylum for people who fear racial, religious, political or other types of persecution in their country of origin (Home Office, 2016a; UNHCR, 2011). This indicates that destination countries even conduct their studies to ensure asylum is given to those constructed as 'deserving' migrants (for example, see Home Office, 2018). However, in most cases, such studies explore the socio-economic and political conditions of the source countries while giving little emphasis to the experiences of the migrants outside of their country of origin. Hence, along Yousafzai, I believe that listening to the voices of refugees in their host countries is vital.

In addition, many people view the condition of refugees in their destination countries from one specific angle: the advantages they obtain. They emphasise the benefits that refugees are assumed to receive in economically advanced countries while overlooking their vulnerabilities (Crawley & Hagen-Zanker, 2019). For instance, they highlight the individual freedom and cash allowances refugees receive in the UK. Moreover, from my experience, many people in Eritrea think that refugees in the UK get their asylum approved quickly and live a lavish life. However, this is not the case as refugees only get a basic subsistence allowance of about £37 a week (Home Office, 1999; Travis, 2018). Besides, many face various challenges such as xenophobic incidents and other hate crimes in their destination countries, including the UK (O'Neill, 2017; Mandrillon, 2018). These challenges often bring uncertainty, insecurity and other negative experiences that refugees run from in their origin countries. It is, therefore, important to look at the situation of migrants in their destination countries, including in Western Europe, where many refugees aspire to live. In this study, informed by refugees' narratives, I suggest that the struggle of migrants does not stop when they reach their host country.

In particular, I focus on the UK due to the significant number of Eritrean migrants there, and the English language. The UK is one of the top destination countries in Europe for Eritrean migrants. Although there is no exact census, there are more than 40,000 Eritrean refugees and British Eritreans in the UK (see Cockcroft, 2008; Home Office, 2019; UNHCR, 2018). Since 2008, about 20,500 Eritreans have applied for asylum in the country (Home Office, 2019). Indeed, Eritreans constituted one of the three major asylum applicant nationalities in the UK since 2014 (Home Office, 2015; Walsh, 2019). Moreover, Arslan et al. (2014) indicated that about a quarter of Eritrean migrants living in Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries were university graduates. Furthermore, the UK is an English-speaking country. English is also the medium of instruction from junior secondary school onwards in Eritrea (Asfaha, 2009; Asfaha et al, 2009). Thus, it is likely that highly educated Eritrean migrants have at least basic communication skills in English. In fact, language proficiency exerts a key influence on the socio-cultural integration of migrants (BeBe, 2012; de Araujo, 2011; Zhang & Goodson, 2011). Overall, the outflow of young and educated Eritrean migrants to the West in general and the UK, in particular, makes this country significant for my study

1.3.2 Touching the Lives of Others

Through the Eritrean case, I believe that my research touches the lives of other refugees in their host countries. I am aware that many refugees in the world need their voices to be heard. I struggled, emotionally, to deal with my unlimited needs and limited time and resources, and realised that I could not manage to cover the voices of every refugee. Hence, I asked myself: how could I reflect the experiences of other migrants in my study? Being aware of the general perception that qualitative research may not be generalisable, I am, nevertheless, optimistic

that my study could be informative to similar cases. I believe that it can go beyond the sample population, to some extent, touching the lives of migrants from other contexts.

Luttrel (2010) stated that many students are concerned about the generalisability of their study. Of course, I too want my study to be generalisable in order to apply to the voices of other migrants, especially as migration has become a common phenomenon in the world. To my surprise, Luttrel left the issue open although she provided some important ideas on how to deal with such concern.

> This question always gives me pause. At the end of the day, I often wonder whether at the root of this question is a greater concern about whether one's research will have relevance and be useful to others. This is a conversation for another time (Luttrel, 2010: 7).

In general, I could say that I had been swinging between my desires and limitations. Then, I decided to use my limited resources as effectively as possible. In addition, my concerns were relieved a little bit as I read Arnove (2007: 14) noting that 'given the limited resources of most researchers working in the academy, the tendency of most individuals is to study areas that are familiar'. Arnove (2007) stated that using a particular case to study education–society relations is common because researchers could not cover the entire population with the limited resources they have. Furthermore, Lodico, Spaulding and Voegtle (2010: 173) suggested that 'although qualitative researchers do not expect their findings to be generalisable to all other settings, it is likely that the lessons learned in one setting might be useful to others'. This is a consoling argument that supports my expectation of this study: to be relevant and useful to others. Although this research may not be generalisable, it can

reflect the experiences of other refugees in the UK, especially those from countries with similar conditions to Eritrea's. It is also important to remember that all asylum seekers/ refugees arriving in Britain face the same immigration policy.

1.4 The Research Problem

Migration has socio-economic and political consequences for the source and destination countries (Appleton, Sives & Morgan, 2006; Vinokur, 2006; Zembylas, 2012). Migrants play a positive role in the economy of their country of origin through remittances and participation in business and scientific networks (Docquier & Rapoport, 2008). They also contribute to the economic growth of their destination countries (Beine, Docquier & Özden, 2011; Docquier & Rapoport, 2008). Yet, migrants often face xenophobia and other violations of human rights from settled populations (Kritzman-Amir & Shumacher, 2012; Misago, 2016). Hence, it is not unusual for migrants to experience socio-emotional and mental distress as a result of their new environment and the negative perceptions from the host population (Maydell-Stevens, Masggoret & Ward, 2007; Vinokur 2006; Zembylas, 2012)--issues I explore further in this study.

Highly educated migrants have skills they can draw on to face the challenges encountered during the process of migration and socio-cultural integration in the host country (Brădăţan & Kulcsár, 2014; Fokkema & de Haas, 2011; Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007). Education plays a key role in adapting to diverse social and cultural environments within and across borders (Marginson, 2010). It also contributes to shaping the experience and life course of immigrants (Brădăţan & Kulcsár, 2014; Fokkema & de Haas, 2011). For instance, the acquisition of higher education contributes to immigrants' labour market integration (Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007) and wealth accumulation (Flippen, 2019). As noted above, Fokkema and

de Haas (2011) also stated that highly educated migrants have better possibilities of socio-cultural integration when compared with less-educated counterparts. This suggests that education greatly affects the situation of migrants concerning their capacity to interact and fit in their host countries (Dustmann & Glitz, 2011; Torres, 1998). Furthermore, proficiency in the host country's language exerts a key influence on the socio-cultural integration of migrants (de Araujo, 2011; Zhang & Goodson, 2011). It makes integration into the established population easier.

However, although English is the medium of instruction in Eritrea, Asfaha (2009) revealed that limited tuition time and teachers' low proficiency in the language led to a very low level of English proficiency throughout the educational system, especially in lower levels of education. Moreover, not all highly educated migrants strive to integrate. For example, Verkuyten (2016) opined that highly educated immigrants create an 'integration paradox' by isolating themselves from the host society. He further stated, 'Education could also be an obstacle for developing positive attitudes toward natives and the host society. A key reason for this might be that highly educated immigrants feel relatively deprived' (2016: 584). In contrast, Fokkema and de Haas (2011) noted that highly skilled immigrants are likely to have more secular and open worldviews than those less educated and are thus able to embrace cultural differences with the established populations and faceless isolation.

Despite high levels of international migration, there is little research on the experiences of migrants in their host country (Fokkema & de Haas, 2011). As Diehl et al (2016: 159) indicated, 'A number of critical questions concerning immigrant integration, relating to differential selection of migrants, and speed and direction of adaptation remain unanswered'. Neither is there much research about how highly educated migrants use their educational

qualifications in integrating into their host country. Drawing on the experiences of migrants, my study contributes to this area of research by focusing on Eritrea.

1.5 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The main aim of my doctoral research was to explore the socio-cultural integration experiences of highly educated Eritrean migrants in the UK. The specific objectives of this study are to:

- Understand the socio-cultural integration experiences of highly educated migrants.
- Identify the factors that influence the socio-cultural integration experiences of highly educated migrants.
- Explore how highly educated migrants use their prior education to integrate into a new culture.

1.6 Research Questions

One overarching and three specific research questions underpin my study. My main question is: how do highly educated Eritrean migrants experience their socio-cultural integration in the UK? More specifically, it addresses the following three research questions:

- How do highly educated Eritrean migrants explain their socio-cultural integration within the UK?
- What are the factors that influence the socio-cultural integration of highly educated Eritrean migrants within the UK?
- How do highly educated Eritrean migrants use their prior to migration educational qualifications to integrate within the UK?

The research questions are important in narrowing the purpose of the study and, accordingly, address the cases (Creswell, 2012, 2013). The central research question 'guides our thinking and is of great value in organising the research project' (Punch, 2009: 60), while the specific research questions ideally follow from the central research question to 'establish the components of the essence' of the research (Creswell, 2013: 141). Overall, the main and specific research questions help to improve the focus and organisation of the study (Punch, 2009).

1.7 Organisation of the Study

The thesis is organised into eight chapters. This chapter has introduced the study and its focus. It also discusses the fundamental concepts of the study including the rationale, research questions and purpose of the study. In this chapter, I have explained that the focus of the study is to explore the situation of migrants in their host country, in this case, the UK. In so doing, I seek to explore how highly educated migrants use their prior educational qualifications to integrate into a new culture or society.

Chapters Two and Three are based on critical and objective analysis of literature review. Chapter Two deals with the main concepts of the study. The chapter discusses the concept 'migration' including its causes and effects. It also analyses the connection between education and migration. In particular, I show that education plays a significant role in the socio-cultural integration of migrants in their host countries. Furthermore, the chapter presents the context of the study, with specific reference to the socio-economic and political conditions of Eritrea and UK immigration policies and conditions.

Chapter Three reviews and analyses the relevant literature relating to globalisation, culture and socio-cultural integration. Here, I look at the debates surrounding cultural globalisation and its effects on migration and migrants. In doing so, I revisit the vulnerability of asylum seekers/refugees during their journey and in their host countries. In addition, I explore the role of culture in shaping the lives of people in general and migrants in particular. Finally, I present two approaches of socio-cultural integration of migrants in their host countries.

Chapter Four discusses the methodology and methods applied in conducting this study. Moreover, the chapter incorporates the epistemological and ontological considerations of the study. It shows that the study used qualitative research with a phenomenological approach to explore the contextual conditions and understand the experiences of the participants. Accordingly, the chapter has presented and discussed the selection of participants, methods of data collection and analysis, and ethical considerations of the study.

Chapters Five, Six and Seven present the findings and analysis of the data collected through narrative interviews. Chapter Five explores the early experiences of highly educated Eritrean migrants in the UK. I explain the causes and routes of the migration as well as the hopes and vulnerabilities of the participants. I show that highly educated Eritreans leave their country due to inhospitable circumstances, but choose their destination based on the information they get from different sources. They reach their final destination following a long, costly and risky route, hoping to receive asylum and start their lives anew within a very short time. However, some of the circumstances they find themselves in do not meet their expectations. Delays in decisions over their asylum applications, the cultural differences they find between their lives in Eritrea and the UK, and the loneliness they face in their host country make them vulnerable, leading to anxiety and psychological distress.

Chapter Six focuses on the expectations, challenges and strategies of the migrants to fit in their host country. In this chapter, I indicate that many highly educated Eritrean migrants come with various expectations. Hoping to easily integrate to the established population in the UK, they face a complex system which requires them to return back to college and volunteer in different institutions, seeking for UK qualification and work experience respectively.

Chapter Seven discusses the connection between migration, family formation and gender relations. It analyses issues of family separation/reunion, marriage and child-rearing. In addition, the chapter presents the findings related to gender and family issues. The chapter puts family at the centre of migrants' socio-cultural integration. It also analyses the role of Eritrean traditional culture in family formation and how it plays out in their post-migration (host country) experiences. Overall, the chapter shows that women migrants are more vulnerable than their men counterparts.

Chapter Eight revisits the research questions summarising the key findings from the study, as well as its implications for the research population, policy decision and migration/educational research. It also discusses the significance and limitations of the study, as well as possibilities for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

MIGRATION, EDUCATION AND THE COUNTRY CONTEXT

> Education should be a means to empower children and adults alike to become active participants in the transformation of their societies. Learning should also focus on the values, attitudes and behaviours which enable individuals to learn to live together in a world characterised by diversity and pluralism (UNESCO, 2017).

2.1 Introduction

Adequate knowledge of a research context is essential in understanding the relevance and applicability of the findings to other samples and contexts (Ponterotto & Grieger, 2007; Ponterotto, 2006). Moreover, describing the context of a study helps readers to better understand the study and relate the findings to other contexts (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Ponterotto, 2006). This chapter outlines the basic concepts and the context of the study. It is divided into four broad sections in order to give a complete picture of the research context. First, I discuss the concept of migration, including its causes and effects. The second section explores the connection between migration and education. While considering many other factors, this study emphasises the impact of educational qualification on migrants' socio-cultural integration. I point out that education and migration are intertwined in many dimensions, and education plays a significant role in the process of socio-cultural integration of migrants (Brădăţan & Kulcsár, 2014; Fokkema & de Haas, 2011; Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007; Torres, 2002). Third, I analyse the UK immigration policies and conditions since the 1940s. The fourth part deals with the socio-economic, political and higher education context of Eritrea.

In this chapter, I indicate that Eritreans have experienced migration for about half a century. War, political persecution and other human rights violations have caused many to flee their country (Kibreab, 2002; Sturge, 2019). In contrast, the UK has been a destination place for many migrants or refugees, especially since the 1980s (Rienzo & Vargas-Silva, 2017). However, the UK has tightened its immigration regulations to control the increase of migrants. Yet, despite the UK's consecutive immigration acts to restrict the number of migrants, the inflow of refugees and migrants continued tremendously (Hawkins, 2016; Home Office, 2018a).

2.2 Migration: An Overview

Migration is an integral part of human history. Human beings have been moving from place to place for social, economic or political reasons from their earliest days (Koser, 2016). Broadly, migration is usually explained in terms of time and space. It is defined as the movement of people that involves a change of usual residence across an administrative boundary such as a village, town, district or country (Kok, 1999). Migration can be in the form of immigration which is described as the number of people entering into a receiving area, or emigration which refers to the flow of people from a country over a given period of time. Moreover, there are two types of migration: internal, when migrants move within their country, and international. As indicated, in this study, I focus on international migration, a situation where migrants live outside of their country of birth for at least one year (Poulain & Perrin, 2001).

Skeldon (2017: 2) argued that migration in general, and international migration in particular, is a complicated concept because 'its measurement depends entirely upon how it is defined in time and across space'. However, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has

provided a better definition of international migration or a ‘migrant’ by avoiding time and territorial limitations.

> A migrant is any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a State away from his/her habitual place of residence, regardless of (1) the person’s legal status; (2) whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary; (3) what the causes for the movement are; or (4) what the length of the stay is (IOM, 2019).

The above definition to some extent considers the multifaceted nature of the concept of migration. However, the question is not only related to the length of time individuals should reside or the distance they should travel to be recognised as migrants, but it is also connected to their long-term status after receiving citizenship in their host country. I wonder what would happen after getting their new citizenship: would they continue to be migrants, the host countries’ citizens or both? In addition, Koser (2016) stated that adopting the definition of migrant as ‘someone living outside their own country for a year or more’ does not provide a complete answer to the question ‘who is a migrant?’ for various reasons:

> First, the concept ‘migrant’ covers a wide range of people in a wide variety of situations. Second, it is very hard to count migrants and to determine how long they have been abroad. Third, just as important as defining when a person becomes a migrant is to define when stop being a migrant. Finally, it has been suggested that, as a result of globalisation, there are now new ‘types’ of migrants with new characteristics, for example comprising transnational communities or diaspora (Koser, 2016: 14).

The term ‘migrant’ comprises a wide range of people including those who are forced into exile, and this connects to the idea that people migrate voluntarily or involuntarily for socio-economic and political reasons (Bauman, 1996; Kempf, 2006; Wiese, 2010). Some people migrate voluntarily -- these are referred to as ‘Tourists’ in Bauman’s (1996) terms. Nevertheless, many of those who come to Europe are forced migrants who have experienced war, persecution and extreme economic hardships in their home countries (UNHCR, 2018). The UNHCR (2018) further stated that such migrants carry on dangerous border crossings and experience extreme displacement and hardship in transit countries. Yet, the world is not hospitable to forced migrants or, in Bauman’s terms, the ‘Vagabonds’ (Bauman, 1996). They can be victims of xenophobic violence (Misago, 2016) and strict immigration control, including detention and even deportation (Kritzman-Amir & Shumacher, 2012).

As discussed above, migrants are categorised according to different labels based on the cause and destination of their movement and their legal status in their country of destination. Accordingly, the term ‘migrant’ encompasses displaced people: ‘individuals who are forced to move against their will’ (Shamsuddoha et al., 2012: 18). There are internally or externally displaced persons depending on whether they crossed their countries’ borders or not. Internally displaced people flee their homes, but they remain within their country of origin. They might get a supply of relief materials such as food, medicines and other basic facilities, but they are not entitled to refugee status under the UN convention (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2010). Refugees often cross international borders due to lack of protection from their government. The 1951 Geneva Convention highlights the distinctive features of refugees.

> A person who is outside his or her country of nationality or habitual residence; has a well-founded fear of being persecuted because of his or her race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion; and is unable or unwilling to avail him— or herself of the protection of that country, or to return there, for fear of persecution (UNHCR, 2011: 3).

Thus, the broad concept of migration includes refugees, who are externally displaced people, and other individuals who move from one place to another for socio-economic and political reasons. However, it is important to note that not all migrants are refugees. As can be understood from the above definition, refugees face a threat of persecution and lack the protection of their own country. In contrast, non-refugee migrants usually leave their country for employment, family reunification or study, and enjoy their governments' protection even when they are abroad. Based on the Geneva Convention, many countries have set eligibility criteria for recognising a person as a refugee or not. For example, the Home Office (2016a) stated that individuals must satisfy two requirements to stay in the UK as refugees. First, they must be unable to live safely in any part of their own country due to racial, religious and political persecution and other human rights violations. Second, they must have failed to get protection from their government. Therefore, anyone without one or more of these features is not recognised as a refugee.

Different reports show that the number of international migrants and asylum seekers is increasing rapidly. Asylum seekers are individuals who are seeking international protection in other countries, but have not yet received any legal recognition or status (Phillips, 2011). By 2017, the world had 258 million international migrants compared to 244 million in 2015, 222 million in 2010 and 173 million in 2000, with an average of 4.73 million people migrating

annually from 2000 to 2017 (UN, 2017). Broadly, women constitute nearly half (about 49 percent) of all the international migrants (UN, 2017). Nevertheless, asylum seekers are mostly men, originating from developing and conflict-ridden areas of the world (Eurostat, 2019). For example, the figure below (Figure 2.1) indicates that females constituted about 32 percent of the total asylum applicants in the European Union [28 countries] in the past ten years. In contrast, male asylum applicants account for more than 63 percent annually. The absence of social and economic independence and networks diminish women's international migration (Kanaiaupuni, 2000).

The United Nations further stated that the participation of women in migration depends on 'their social roles, their capacity for making decisions and exerting autonomy, their access to societal resources and the existing gender stratification in origin and destination countries' (UN, 2005: 16). Moreover, women in several developing countries are restricted from migrating due to traditional gender roles which perceive women as housewives (Scott & Clery, 2013) and for their protection from sexual abuse and other human rights violation during the migration journey (Ratha, Mohapatra & Scheja, 2011). Many women are abused and sexually assaulted during the journey to their destination countries (Mixed Migration Centre, 2018). This suggests that the challenges for women are not confined to their country of origin; they are also pertinent during their journey and in their destination places. Of course, this does not mean that male migrants and refugees are safe, but females are more vulnerable to exploitation and mistreatment during and after their journey (Kawar, 2004; Palumbo & Sciurba, 2018).

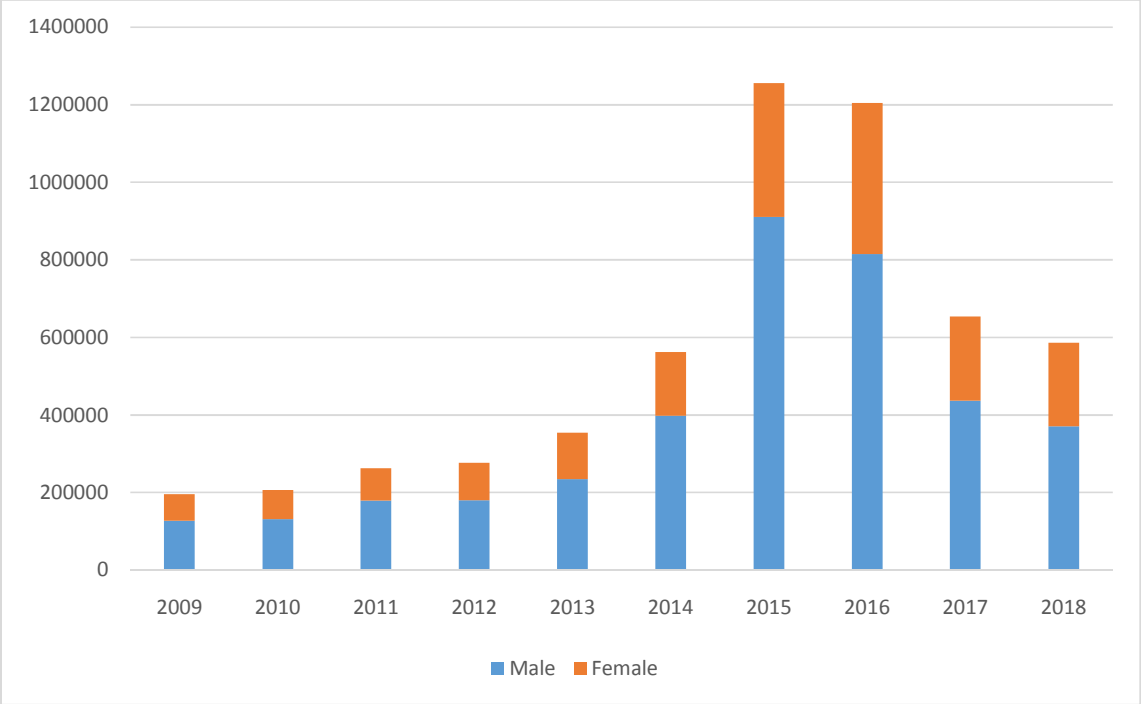

Figure 2.1 First-time asylum applicants by sex in the European Union from 2009 to 2018 (Eurostat, 2019)

Figure 2.1 shows that the number of asylum seekers in the European Union decreased in the last two years. Yet, there were more than half a million applicants in the region in 2018. Furthermore, over the last two decades, there was a worldwide increase in the number of displaced people (Bohnsack, 2017; UNHCR, 2018). The total number of displaced people increased from about 33.9 million in 1997 to 65.6 million in 2016 (see Figure 2.2), and it reached 70.8 million people in 2018 (UNHCR, 2019). In addition, the figure below shows that since 1997 the proportion of displaced people rose by one-third, mounting to nine displaced individuals per 1,000 people in 2016.

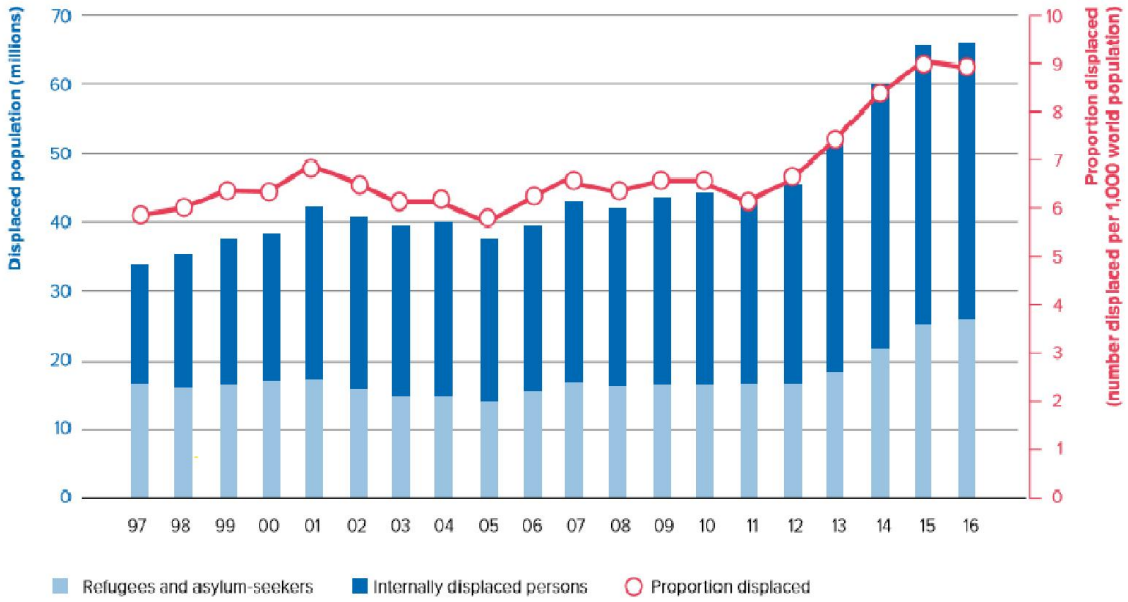

Figure 2.2 Trend of global displacement and proportion displaced from 1997 to 2016 (Bohnsack, 2017: 10)

Moreover, the UNHCR (2018) explained that there were about 16.2 million newly displaced individuals in the year 2017, out of which 11.8 million were internally displaced while the rest 4.4 million were refugees and asylum seekers. This suggests that the rise in the number of refugees and asylum seekers contributes to the increasing number of international migration. Generally, continued conflict has been the main reason for the displacement of people in several countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Syria and Myanmar (UNHCR, 2018). It deteriorates the socio-economic and political conditions of countries affecting the safety of millions of people. I discuss the causes of migration in details below.

2.2.1 The Push-Pull Factors of Migration

In this section, I explore the reasons which incite people in general and highly educated individuals in particular to leave their home country. I also discuss the factors that attract

them to specific regions or countries. By focusing on explanations that concentrate on asylum-related migration, I show that socio-economic and political instability causes the movement of people towards safer and economically developed regions of the world.

Everett Lee is one of the scholars who contributed to theories of migration and the push-pull model in particular. Despite its original focus on labour or economic migration, the 'push-pull' model has been expanded to a different group of migrants including refugees (James & Mayblin, 2016). Lee identified four sets of factors that influence people's decision to migrate: 'factors associated with the area of origin; factors associated with the area of destination; intervening obstacles; and personal factors' (1966: 50). Factors associated with the area of origin or push factors trigger refugees to leave their country. As indicated above, conflict and economic insecurity facilitate international migration (Sirkeci, 2005; UNHCR, 2018). This suggests that it is not a coincidence that Syrians, Eritreans and Afghans have been among the top ten nationalities for asylum seekers in the last decade.

War and political turmoil in Afghanistan and Syria, and the Ethio-Eritrean border war greatly contributed to the exodus of people from these countries (Cummings et al., 2015). Moreover, as Tessema and N'goma (2009) noted, deteriorating economic conditions and lack of peace, stability and good governance are the main factors that cause the migration of highly skilled individuals from many developing countries. Tessema's and N'goma's points particularly relate to the socio-economic and political development of African states. Most of the countries are rich in resources, but the ordinary people have not benefitted due to conflict, corruption and bad governance (Mlambo et al., 2019). Thus, many people including highly educated ones flee their countries to save their lives as well as improve their economic conditions (Martin & Zürcher, 2008; Parkins, 2010).

In most cases, refugees end up in neighbouring countries (UNHCR, 2018). However, some continue their journey to other countries selected for various reasons. Refugees mainly choose their destination country based on the recognition rate --the probability of getting asylum in the country (James & Mayblin, 2016). Their safety is the primary concern when choosing their destination. Of course, they also consider socio-economic factors such as better job opportunities and wage levels to improve their economic condition and support their family (Docquier & Rapoport, 2008). They look for countries where their careers could thrive and their professional work is recognised (Brădăţan & Kulcsár, 2014). Hence, many refugees prefer economically developed countries that could grant them asylum and better living standard (Martin & Zürcher, 2008; Parkins, 2010). However, identifying such destinations requires knowledge of the country and possibly of other countries that could serve for comparison.

Technological globalisation, through the internet, television and other networks, has allowed people to learn about socio-economic and political life of other countries (Adam et al., 1997; Stanojoska & Blagoce, 2012). Migrants can access the information they need to identify the advantages and disadvantages of going to a particular country. They also use the information to compare their origin and destination countries. Accordingly, they decide to travel towards a particular place when the evidence in favour of the move is enough to overcome their current situation and other sets of intervening factors (Lee, 1966). Nevertheless, it is important to note that not all the information they get is complete or reliable (Lieber & Weisberg, 2002). They just use the information they have to decide where to go because, in most cases, they travel a long, risky and costly journey to reach their destination place (Laub, 2015; UNHCR, 2018a). Most of them understand that the intervening factors such as distance

and cost of the journey could be barriers, but they pay a huge price, in some cases their lives, to make their dream a reality: escape war, human rights abuse and economic hardships.

Some studies criticise the push-pull model for various reasons (for example, see European Communities, 2000; James & Mayblin, 2016). According to European Communities (2000: 3), the model does not explain 'why within regions some people move and others stay'. Nonetheless, this is well captured within the push-pull model. The model is not independent because there are personal factors which influence how people respond to push and pull factors (Lee, 1966). These factors affect the decisions of individuals to migrate. For instance, as shown above, information about other parts of the world and personal networks are important elements for individuals' decisions to migrate or not. In addition, sensitivity or resistance to change is a significant factor as some people migrate for little provocation while others wait until they are forced into exile.

Furthermore, James and Mayblin (2016: 6) concluded that the pull elements are 'unsuitable for application in the case of asylum seekers'. However, in this thesis (see Chapter Five), I show that this conclusion overlooks the 'refugees' dreams'. Indeed, refugees might not decide about their destination place at their initial displacement, but they later do so because, like anyone else, they have dreams. As indicated above, they pay a high price to reach their destination and live their dreams. For instance, in 2015, about 153,842 migrants arrived in Italy by sea (IOM, 2017). Nevertheless, many of them did not stop there. They continued their journey to seek asylum elsewhere. The case of Eritrean arrivals is an evident example. In 2015, out of 36,838 Eritreans who arrived in Italy, only 475 of them applied for asylum; while the rest travelled to and sought asylum in Switzerland, Germany, Netherlands, Sweden, Norway and the UK (Llanni, 2016). In fact, it is important to understand the specific reason

why they choose one European country over another. In this study, I have addressed this issue by looking at my participants' preference of the UK over other countries.

2.2.2 Effects of Migration

There is an ongoing debate on the effect of migration both at individual and national levels. Some of these scholarly and policy debates are related to migration and development (for example, see Arslan et al., 2014; de Haas, 2010, 2011; Docquier & Rapoport, 2008; Dustmann, Glitz & Frattini, 2008). However, issues of national security have affected policy debates on migration, especially after 9/11. Schüller (2016) explained that 9/11 had a negative impact on attitudes toward migrants not only in the USA, but also in other countries such as Canada and Germany. Many countries established more restrictive immigration policies while xenophobic violence towards immigrants increased (Castanho Silva, 2018). Generally, migration has a significant socio-economic and political effect on migrants, and source and destination countries (Appleton et al., 2006; Vinokur, 2006; Zembylas, 2012).

As indicated, many migrants travel through long and risky routes which expose them to mistreatment and even death (Laub, 2015; UNHCR, 2018a). Such situations are prevalent for vagabonds, who often flee their countries to avoid harsh conditions (Bauman, 1996). Eritrean migrants cross many countries' borders to reach their destination such as Israel and the UK (Laub, 2015). In the past decade, many Eritreans suffered and died at the hand of human traffickers and the Mediterranean Sea on the route to their destination countries. According to Van Reisen and Rijken (2015), many Eritreans were killed, tortured and raped by human traffickers in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula. Moreover, the UNHCR reported that thousands of people die or go missing while crossing the Mediterranean Sea (UNHCR, 2015, 2018a). For instance, about 13,457 people died or went missing at sea from 2014 to 2017 (UNHCR,

2018a). The number of dead and missing people in the Mediterranean Sea also has increased due to Italy's moves to prevent rescue ships from picking up migrants offshore Libya (Tondo, 2019). Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) were making a big contribution in minimizing the death of migrants along the Central Mediterranean Sea route. Nevertheless, 'in July 2017, Italy drafted an EU-sponsored code of conduct' aimed at regulating migrant rescuing NGOs operating offshore Libya (Cusumano, 2019: 106). This took away the little hope and support that migrants had to cross the Mediterranean safely. In fact, even those who made it safely are often tormented by the harsh experiences they encountered on their journey. The extreme human rights abuse and risky journey negatively affect their psychological and emotional wellbeing (Boccagni & Baldassar, 2015).

However, migration could also be a means of scientific networks and source of income to many immigrants and source countries (Beine et al., 2011). As discussed above, migrants in general and refugees in particular leave their country for the pursuit of a better life. They look for a place which provides them with protection and economic opportunity. Therefore, they use the prospect to develop themselves and support their families who are left in their country of origin. In addition, migrants contribute to the economic growth of their destination countries (Beine et al., 2011; Docquier & Rapoport, 2008). They had been a driving force for the economic growth of the USA by adding manpower to the labour force and creating jobs through their small businesses (Ko Chin, 2013). Similarly, Pettinger (2017) explained that immigration benefited the UK economy by increasing labour force, aggregate demand and real Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and reducing dependency ratio. At the same time, migrants can get better-paid jobs and improve their economic condition. Nonetheless, not all immigrants are welcomed and feel at home in their new environment. They may face

xenophobic acts and other violations of human rights from the host population (Kritzman-Amir & Shumacher, 2012; Misago, 2016).

Furthermore, migration affects the emotional conditions of migrants and members of the receiving country (Zembylas, 2012). Many migrants deal with negative emotions associated with loss, suffering, hardship and even abuse. Simultaneously, some members of the host country experience fear, anger and resentment towards migrants who come to their country. It can be argued that both the migrants and members of the receiving country have their reasons for such emotions. For the migrants, it is a strain to integrate into the socio-cultural, economic and political environment of the new country. Moreover, many migrants face enormous socio-emotional difficulties as they emigrate from their country of origin. Studying the emotional suffering related to migration, Crocker (2015) stated that fear and trauma are the two most commonly mentioned experiences related to a border crossing.

Crocker (2015) further explained that immigrants identified fear of criminal extortion and kidnapping as heightened anxieties. I believe that these situations are highly prevalent for vagabonds who experience human rights violations and other dangers on the route to their destination place. In such a situation, many migrants experience extreme fear and worries, as well as outbursts of strong emotions, nightmares and other sleep problems (Crocker, 2015; UNHCR, 2018). Discourses of competition for jobs (Brown & Lauder, 2006) and potential terrorism (Huysmans & Buonfino, 2008; Martin & Martin, 2004) often circulate among the receiving population. Such phenomena can increase the fear and hatred of the receiving people and sometimes lead to racial and ethnic oppression and violation of the human rights of migrants by the host people (Kempf, 2006; Suárez-Orozco, 2001; Zembylas, 2012).

People's emotions are related to their life trajectories within a particular environment. They are connected to socio-cultural relationships that people make within their social and ethnic boundaries (De Leersnyder, Mesquita & Kim, 2011). Moreover, Boccagni and Baldassar (2015) stated that the emotional life of migrants is an indication of their socio-cultural interactions and constructions throughout their life trajectories. This suggests that people's emotion might change with a change of life trajectories initiated through different means including a change of environment. The emotion of people change as they migrate from their home countries to other places (Boccagni & Baldassar, 2015). In this way, migration calls for necessary adjustments in the psychological and cultural developmental process of individuals, affecting their cultural identity (Wiese, 2010). When migrants leave their original place where they have built the first and essential cultural and psychological identifications, they often adjust their identities to the new culture in a process of acculturation and deculturation (Kim, 2001).

However, this is not usually a smooth process as an emotional concordance to the host culture might create unpleasant feelings. Such adjustment-related feelings are some of the scenarios that I sought to explore in this study. I wanted to listen to the voices of my participants concerning their socio-cultural experiences in the UK, including issues of inclusion, exclusion and related emotional responses.

2.3 Migration and Education

Following my exploration of the concept of migration, I turn to the connection between migration and education by looking at the migration of highly educated persons and, then, discuss the role of educational qualification in migration. I emphasise on highly educated migrants from developing to developed countries to better understand the case under study.

To do this, it is important to establish a common understanding of the concept of 'highly educated' individuals.

As shown above, migration can be classified into different categories based on the causes of migration and geographical distribution of the migrants. Social class and educational qualification of the migrants can also make a further distinction (Bhugra & Becker, 2005). According to Milio et al. (2012), scholars are not able to concur on the definition of highly educated individuals due to the differences in the education systems and recognition of the qualifications between countries. However, the definition given by OECD, the UN and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) share fundamental similarities. According to the OECD and UN (2013: 4), highly educated individuals are defined as 'persons who have completed tertiary education'. Similarly, UNESCO (2012) stated that highly educated are those who have completed higher education of two or more years. For this study, I focus on migrants who have at least a bachelor's degree from Eritrean higher education institutions.

The concept of highly educated individuals is mainly associated with obtaining a higher education qualification. Higher education qualifications in the UK include diplomas, bachelor's degrees, foundation degrees and postgraduate degrees (Rattray & Raaper, 2019). These qualifications are normally offered in universities, colleges and specialist institutions to eighteen or older individuals. This is not significantly different from the situation in Eritrea. Nevertheless, it is important to note that having a first degree is a privilege in Eritrea, where the tertiary education Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) is less than 4 percent (UNESCO, 2019). In contrast, a bachelor's degree might not have similar societal recognition in the UK, a country with a tertiary education GER of about 60 percent. Yet, the Office for National

Statistics (2017) stated that university graduates have better employment opportunities than non-graduates.

> In July to September 2017, graduates were more likely to be employed than non-graduates. Non-graduates aged 21 to 30 have consistently higher unemployment rates than all other groups; non-graduates aged 21 to 30 have much higher inactivity rates than recent graduates. Graduates were more likely to work in high-skilled posts than non-graduates (2017: 2).

This indicates that educational qualification is significant in the UK's job market. The main question, however, is whether Eritrean qualifications have similar importance or not. In this study, I was particularly interested in the applicability of the knowledge, skills and attitudes that the Eritrean migrants gain from their university studies in Eritrea. In addition, I aimed to explore the contributions that these skills and qualifications make in the socio-cultural integration of the migrants in the UK.

2.3.1 Migration of Highly Educated Individuals

Being a highly educated migrant has many advantages. As discussed in the next section, education facilitates socio-cultural and economic integration of migrants. Nevertheless, it is important to note that educational qualification is a single aspect of identities. Other elements such as personal, demographic and structural factors also have significant effect on the lives of migrants in their destination countries (Algan, Bisin & Verdier, 2012; Bailey & Mulder, 2017; Fokkema & de Haas, 2011; Heckman, 2006). Bailey and Mulder noted that being a highly educated migrant is one of many identifications and might be related to 'privileges on the one hand and discrimination on the other' (2017: 2691). This suggests that there are many

other identifications, such as gender and ethnicity, which influence the impact of an educational qualification (see Fokkema & de Haas, 2011; Hall, 1996; Moreau & Leathwood, 2006). These issues, for example, affect labour market segmentation and discrimination.

A study by the University of Michigan (2004) found that highly educated men in the USA would prefer to marry a woman with a lower qualification or accomplishment. However, recent studies show that highly educated men and women in the USA prefer someone with the same level of education (Qian, 2018; Saner, 2015). Yet, Qian (2018) stated that the situation has not changed in China. She pointed out, 'As education increases for women, the likelihood of them finding a match for marriage decreases, whereas the possibilities increase for men'. Besides, wives' employment and high job status have a direct effect on marital instability such as marital dissatisfaction and conflict (Booth et al., 1984; Byrne & Barling; 2017). It erodes the stability of the marriage and, perhaps, leads to either separation or divorce. These conditions might be prevalent in my study considering the experiences of women migrants and the Eritrean patriarchal society. As indicated above, women in general and women migrants in particular are more vulnerable to exploitation (Bhattacharyya, 2018; Kawar, 2004; Palumbo & Sciurba, 2018; Zarkov & Davis, 2018).

Furthermore, Bailey and Mulder (2017) noted that highly educated migrants coming from developing countries experience many challenges. The main argument here is that prior educational qualification alone might not make a significant difference to the lives of migrants because of the effect of other issues such as gender, ethnicity and place of origin (see also Moreau & Leathwood, 2006). Garrido and Codó (2017: 44) showed that highly skilled African migrants living in Spain experience 'deskilling and delanguaging'. They lack recognition of their foreign qualifications, mastery of the English language and work

experience, resulting in low competitive power in the job market. The same condition was reported by Wilson-Forsberg (2015) who studied Latin American immigrants in Canada.

Wilson-Forsberg also explained that deskilling makes migrants nostalgic of the previous dominant positions they held in their countries of origin. In such condition, they create an 'integration paradox' by isolating themselves from the host society (Verkuyten, 2016). Instead, they associate with other co-nationals who share similar situations (Wilson-Forsberg, 2015). This affects their social capital, which is significant to gain material and symbolic benefits, and exerts 'multiplier effect' on cultural and economic capitals (Bourdieu, 1986: 249). In other words, self-isolation negatively affects the social capital of migrants because:

> The volume of the social capital possessed by a given agent thus depends on the size of the network of connections he can effectively mobilise and on the volume of the capital (economic, cultural or symbolic) possessed in his own right by each of those to whom he is connected (Bourdieu, 1986: 249).

Therefore, it can be inferred that deskilling has a short and long-term effect on migrants. It minimises their interaction with the host society, which then affects their socio-cultural integration process.

Discrimination is another issue which affects highly skilled migrants in their host countries (Bosanquet & Doeringer, 1973; Hayter, 2016; Riach & Rich, 1991; Wood et al., 2009). As discussed below, racist discrimination has for decades been part of the UK immigration policy. For instance, the Commonwealth Immigrants Act in 1962 introduced the voucher system to decrease immigration of non-white people to the UK (Freeman, 1978; Hayter,

2016). Additionally, the UK follows a very restrictive immigration policy for applicants from developing countries, especially African countries (BBC, 2012; Kelland, 2018). The BBC (2012) reported that UK Border Agency staff were unfairly rejecting visas for Africans.

In addition, African and Asian researchers seeking short-term visas are more likely to face visa-related problems than European or North American researchers (McInroy et al., 2016). Recently, many scientists accused the Home Office of institutional racism because seventeen African and Asian delegates who were planning to attend the 2018 global health conference in London were denied visas to enter the UK (Kelland, 2018). After having been denied a UK visa to participate in the Fifth Global Symposium on Health System Research and the Emerging Voices for Global Health (EV4GH) workshop, Sabu, a PhD Scholar from India, shared his reflection as follows:

> After having my documents verified and doing the biometric tests, I went back home in the hopes of receiving the visa. However, 25 days after submitting the application, I received the decision letter which contained a rejection of my application. The reason cited for the visa rejection was the insufficient balance on my bank account statement (Sabu, 2018).

Complex visa requirements, including visa application costs, prevent many researchers from entering European and other economically developed countries. Additionally, the rise of hostile populist rhetoric in many parts of the world such as the USA, Italy and the UK has intensified immigration controls and racist attitudes against migrants. Furthermore, there is racial discrimination against Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) applicants in recruitment practices in Britain (see Bosanquet & Doeringer, 1973; Wood et al., 2009).

Siddique (2019) also indicated that this is a long-lasting feature and the level of discrimination has remained unchanged since the late 1960s.

Moreover, highly skilled migration has significant national and international impact. Marchiori, Shen and Docquier (2013) argued that highly skilled emigration affects developing countries' economies by determining the number of highly skilled workers available to domestic production and affecting the creative capacity of the countries to cope with the fast-changing and globalised world. In this sense, migration of highly educated individuals affects the economic development of their origin countries positively and negatively. It promotes economic stability through reducing unemployment, better job/wage opportunity and bringing foreign exchange to the countries. Thus, they can contribute to the economy of their origin country through remittances, return migration or participation in business and scientific networks (Bailey & Mulder, 2017; Docquier & Rapoport, 2008).

However, the loss of highly educated individuals could be critical to the development of origin countries, especially if they do not have adequate skilled human resources. It often takes the limited skilled human resources away from poor countries and hinders their economic development (Bailey & Mulder, 2017; Docquier & Rapoport, 2008). In fact, migration has depleted the human resources of many Eritrean institutions and badly affected their effectiveness. Every year, thousands of highly educated Eritreans leave the country legally or illegally, in most cases through illegal border crossing. As a result, many organisations including educational institutions have been lacking adequate and qualified human resources. HEIs and senior secondary schools have been supplemented with costly foreign teachers, when compared to local ones (Tsegay, 2019). Besides, the foreign teachers sometimes travel to their country in the middle of a semester due to family or any other

personal problems and, in some cases, return late or do not come back at all. This influences the production of skilled human resources and the average educational attainment of those remaining in the country (Dustmann & Glitz, 2011).

At the international level, skilled emigration is also viewed as a factor contributing to inequality levels between the rich and the poor, where economically rich countries become richer at the expenses of the poor ones (Docquier & Rapoport, 2008). Although there is an increasing public pressure toward limiting migration, industrialised countries are still taking the highly educated human resources of developing countries (Brădăţan & Kulcsár, 2014). The UK has intensified its immigration policy, but it still recruits thousands of nurses from the Philippines, India and other economically developing countries (Alonso-Garbayo & Maben, 2009; Marsh & Loudon, 2017). Moreover, there is a similar condition in the USA and other developed countries. Such policy polarises broad regions of the world and, in some settings, has deepened patterns of inequality (Appleton et al., 2006; Brown & Lauder, 2006; Docquier & Rapoport, 2008; Kellner, 2002; Suárez-Orozco, 2001).

2.3.2 The Role of Educational Qualification in Migration

This section explores the role of education on migrants' socio-cultural and economic integration in their host countries. According to Dustmann and Glitz (2011), educational qualification plays an important role in the migration process of an individual. It further helps individuals to identify the competing forms of cultural (local), national or global identities and address the implications of ethnicity, religion, class, race and gender (Torres, 1998). Overall, this suggests that educational qualification fosters an individual's ability to embrace cultural differences and integrate into a new society.

As stated above, migration and education are intertwined. Education makes a significant contribution at many stages of an individual's migration, starting from the immigration process to the socio-cultural integration stage within a host country. It also plays a vital role in the immigration policies of various countries, including the UK. Due to increasing public pressure toward limiting immigration, industrialised countries have tightened their immigration standards to demand higher educational qualification from potential immigrants (Brădăţan & Kulcsár, 2014). Various mechanisms such as the skill scheme have been used to minimise the number of low-skilled immigrants in the UK (Hayter, 2016). Similarly, the USA has put minimum requirements in place to exclude those with less education or work experience from applying for the Diversity Immigrant Visa (DV). Applying for DV now requires at least a high school diploma or two years of work experience in a job that demands a minimum of two years of training. This indicates that educational qualification to some extent serves as a means or barrier to visa acquisition.

Moreover, education is a key element in the formation of a global environment. It provides fundamental knowledge, skill and values to communities within and across their borders (Marginson, 2010). Many scholars emphasise that events occurring many miles away are shaping local happenings, and vice versa (Giddens, 1990; Rhoads & Torres, 2006; Marginson, 2010). Yet, socio-cultural diversity of nation-states is increasing (Suárez-orozco, 2001; Banks, 2004) and new economic and cultural orientations are developing (Marginson, 2010) throughout the world. Besides, people's differences are becoming greater and wider and even challenging as they travel from one nation-state to another. It is in this condition that education becomes indispensable to socio-cultural and economic development of migrants. It plays an important role in the integration stage in their host country. Concerning migrants' experience in the USA, Brădăţan and Kulcsár explained:

> Education plays a significant role in shaping the immigrants' experience and life course in the USA. The modes of entry, degree of assimilation or integration, demographic dynamics, income, and family structure, are all tied to the level of education the immigrant comes with or achieves in the USA (2014: 512).

This indicates that education greatly determines the situation of migrants to live in peace and harmony within their host countries (see also Dustmann & Glitz, 2011; Torres, 1998). It enables migrants to appreciate or tolerate diversity and foster their integration and cooperation with the established society. Moreover, I suggest that the host country (population) should be prepared to embrace and use highly educated migrants. Such initiative could enable the migrants to feel at home and socialise with the host society. In this sense, educational qualification including the language and communication skills, as a medium, can play a significant role in integrating both the migrants and host people (Freire, 2010; Torres, 2002).

Furthermore, the acquisition of higher education helps immigrants to easily integrate into the labour market. For instance, the USA labour market is less hospitable to poorly educated migrants while warmly welcoming those with qualifications and English language proficiency (Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007), thus affecting differently their socio-cultural integration and wealth accumulation (Flippen, 2019). Migrants can be more competitive in the labour market if they are highly educated. In fact, English language acquisition is significant in getting even low-skilled jobs. Additionally, Naumann, Stoetzer, and Pietrantuono (2018) indicated that highly skilled migrants are preferred over low-skilled migrants in many European countries. However, economic considerations are not the only

explanation for host people's attitudes towards immigrants. The political environment and populist government agendas, in particular, can affect the process of attitude formation and change (Naumann, Stoetzer & Pietrantuono, 2018). De Paola and Brunello (2016) also stated that cultural and racial intolerance between native individuals and immigrants might cause anti-immigration sentiments. These arguments show that people with similar academic qualifications could be treated differently based on their race or other categories.

It is also key to understand that academic qualifications do not guarantee a decent job for migrants, especially to those from developing countries (Wilson-Forsberg, 2015; Garrido & Codó, 2014). Therefore, as many migrants cannot find suitable employment in their fields of training, they are forced to work in semi-skilled and low-skilled occupations. Besides, as noted above, deskilling leads migrants to rely on nostalgic notions of identity and culture, and can cause them to associate with people who experience similar conditions (Wilson-Forsberg, 2015). On the contrary, some migrants upgrade their educational level and start afresh.

2.4 A Review of UK Immigration Policies and Conditions

The UK is an island state made up of four countries: England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. It is located in northern Europe and has a population of about 66.5 million people (UN, 2019). Since the Second World War, the UK has introduced several policies, first to encourage people to migrate to the UK, and later to restrict the number of people who migrate to the country (Hampshire County Council, 2010). After the end of the Second World War, like many European countries, the UK was engaged in reconstructing the country and boosting its economic development. Therefore, it followed a loose immigration policy that could attract people for the reconstruction and other sectors of the economy such as the National Health Service (NHS) and high-tech industries (Freeman, 1978; Geddes, 2003).

Conversely, the decade from 1962 to 1971 marked a defining shift in the legal framework to restrict the inflow of immigrants from different countries, including Commonwealth countries and British colonies (Hatton & Price, 1999). Since the 1990s, with the influx of refugees fleeing conflicts in the Balkans and other parts of the world, UK immigration laws have incorporated asylum issues. This section addresses UK immigration policies since the Second World War, the time when foreign immigration grew steadily (Karpf, 2002; Migration Watch UK, 2014).

2.4.1 1948 to the 1980s: From Dual Citizenship to Exclusion

In 1948, the UK passed the British Nationality Act which came into force in January 1949. This Act granted dual status to all citizens of Commonwealth countries, making them 'Citizens of the UK and Colonies' (British Nationality Act, 1948: 6). It also gave people from British colonies and independent Commonwealth countries the possibility of entering the UK without any immigration control, as well as of working and settling for as long as they wished. Soon after, some British people, including the ruling class, started to express racist attitudes especially towards non-white immigrants to oppose this unrestricted movement of migrants (Dummett, 2001). For example, in the 1960s, it was common to see advertisements for accommodation to bear the words 'No Blacks, No Dogs, No Irish' (Scully, 2015: 138). This was a sign that non-white immigrants were not welcome and a call for changes to the 1948 Act, which allowed a bulky influx of immigrants.

Because of widespread opposition to immigration, the UK government passed various consecutive laws to control the flow of immigrants. In July 1962, the Commonwealth Immigrants Act 1962 became effective, limiting the rights of Commonwealth citizens to enter the UK without being subject to immigration control. The Act made immigration control

tighter, allowing people to enter the UK on condition that they had a voucher. This shows that the UK's immigration controls partly focused on the acquisition of higher education qualifications or employment. Accordingly, a voucher was issued to those who had pre-arranged employment, special skills or when there was a need for labour. Freeman (1978) argued that the voucher system was intended to slow the immigration of non-White people to the UK. Similarly, Hayter (2016) noted that the voucher system was designed to discriminate against people of colour through the skill scheme because the UK government anticipated that Whites would be the majority people with the necessary skills. Nonetheless, as the Act allowed spouses and children of the primary migrants, a significant number of people entered the UK through family unification (Hatton & Price, 1999). This, in fact, made the Act less effective than expected.

The year 1968 was marked by a new immigration act. In addition, as indicated below, Kenya's Africanisation policy and Enoch Powell's address were significant features of the year. In February 1968, the UK parliament passed the Commonwealth Immigrants Act 1968 to increase control on citizens of the United Kingdom and Colonies. The Act was initiated at the time when about 200,000 Kenyan Asians were fleeing Kenya due to its 'Africanisation policy'. Through this policy, the Kenyan government stopped renewing the work permits of Asians and discharged them from the civil service, restricting them to certain sectors of the economy (Hansen, 2000). The fleeing Kenyan Asians hoped to enter and reside in the UK. However, according to the Commonwealth Immigrants Act 1968, entry to the UK was only allowed for people who were born in the UK or those who had at least one of their parents or grandparents born in the UK. Moreover, the Act tightened the immigration control on people entering through the voucher system. It also abolished the 'domestic labour' category from the system (Hatton & Price, 1999).

Soon after the initiation of the Commonwealth Immigrants Act 1968, Enoch Powell[2] attacked the UK's immigration policy, saying that the UK had to be mad to allow in 50,000 dependents of immigrants each year (Powell, 1968). In his address, commonly known as *Rivers of Blood Speech*, Powell further stated, 'In this country in fifteen or twenty years' time the black man will have the whip hand over the White man'. Clearly, some UK politicians were still not satisfied with the immigration policy of 1968. Hence, strengthening immigration policy against Commonwealth immigrants became the focus of the 1970's election campaign (Freeman, 1978).

The Conservative government won the 1970 election and enacted the Immigration Act 1971 which came into force in 1973 (Freeman, 1978). Hatton and Price (1999: 12) argued that the Act was 'symbolic' for two reasons: ending unrestricted migration to the UK, and its timing. It came into effect on 1 January 1973, the same day that the UK joined the European Community. Furthermore, Dummett (2001: 105) noted that the immigration law was a 'blatantly racist concept of patriality'. According to the Immigration Act 1971, patrial Commonwealth citizens were given the right of abode in the UK. By the mid-1971, there were about 1.5 million BAME people in the UK, representing about 2.5 percent of the country's population (Freeman, 1978). About half of these people were born in Britain (Freeman, 1978). The Immigration Act 1971 became the cornerstone of all future immigration laws focusing on restricting the number of immigrants in the UK. In 1988, the UK introduced a new immigration act. However, the Immigration Act 1988 did not change the basic principles of the Immigration Act 1971; it rather made detailed amendments to

[2] Enoch Powell was a British politician and a Conservative Member of Parliament.

several cases. For instance, the Immigration Act 1988 restricted entry clearance and issue of certificates of the right of abode for polygamous marriages (Immigration Act 1988).

2.4.2 In the 1990s: Towards a Fairer, Faster and Firmer Approach

The UK was one of the first countries to sign the 1951 Refugee Convention (Home Office, 1998). The convention defines the term 'refugee' and outlines the rights of displaced people and countries' obligations to protect them (UN, 1950). As indicated above, the term 'refugee' does not apply to every international migrant. Refugees are forced to flee their country due to a threat of persecution and lack of protection (UNHCR, 2010, 2011). In contrast, as noted above, migrants may leave their country for employment, study or family reunification, and continue to enjoy the protection of their government (UNHCR, 2011). The number of asylum seekers in the UK increased from 3,998 in 1988 to 44,840 in 1991 (Hawkins, 2016). As a signatory of the Refugee Convention, the UK set up different procedures to deal with the large number of asylum seekers. In particular, it incorporated immigration and asylum laws to reject unfounded asylum claims (Fiddick, 1999). In the 1990s, the UK parliament passed three asylum and immigration acts.

The UK introduced the Asylum and Immigration Appeals Act in 1993. As its name indicates, the Act incorporated asylum and immigration laws. It introduced the fingerprinting of all asylum seekers to control multiple applications. It also included housing and financial provisions for asylum seekers. In addition, the 1993 Act ensured the right for appeal to those whose application for asylum is refused. In 1996, the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 amended and supplemented the Asylum and Immigration Appeals Act 1993. The 1996 Act put restrictions on the employment of people without valid immigration documents.

Moreover, it created offences to employing people without permission to live and work in the UK and to the use of deception for obtaining leave to remain in the country.

As shown above, the 1993 and 1996 Acts brought many new measures. However, they were not fully successful in addressing issues of asylum seekers as the number of asylum applications were increasing whereas decisions were slow (Stevens, 2001). In July 1998, the UK government presented a White Paper entitled *Fairer, faster and firmer- A modern approach to immigration and asylum* to the parliament. The paper aimed to enable a quick pass through immigration control for those who deserve it, and quickly and firmly deal with those who are not entitled to enter or remain in the UK (Home Office, 1998). The target of the White Paper was mainly to control illegal migrants and asylum seekers by separating them from the local communities and increasing the use of detention (Malloch & Stanley, 2005).

Following the 1998 White Paper, the UK issued the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999. The 1999 Act restricted marriage for immigration purposes and placed a target of processing asylum applications within six months. It also replaced welfare benefits for asylum seekers with the voucher system in order to discourage economic migrants. Furthermore, the 1999 Act allowed for a no-choice basis provision of housing and, thus, led to the dispersion of asylum seekers around the UK.

2.4.3 In the 21st Century: Empowering the Gatekeepers

In continuation of previous regulations, the UK passed many immigration and asylum acts in the first two decades of the 21st century. There were five consecutive acts in the first decade of the century, and two new acts were added in the second decade. They are:

1. Nationality, Asylum and Immigration Act 2002;
2. Asylum and Immigration Act 2004;
3. Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006;
4. UK Borders Act 2007;
5. Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009;
6. Immigration Act 2014; and
7. Immigration Act 2016.

The Nationality, Asylum and Immigration Act 2002 focused on the citizenship ceremony of immigrants. It also specified the restrictions and removal of rejected asylum applicants. The Act (2002: 1-2) required 'sufficient knowledge about life in the United Kingdom' for naturalisation and, hence, placed two examinations for immigrants: the English test and citizenship exam. Furthermore, the Asylum and Immigration Act 2004 made some changes to the asylum law. It introduced a single form for appeal and limited access to refused asylum applicants. In addition, entering the UK without travel documents and assisting unlawful immigration became offences.

The Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 created a five-tier points-based system for awarding entry visa to the UK. The Act also initiated the sharing of information between immigration, police, and revenue and customs departments. Subsequently, the UK Borders Act 2007 permitted immigration officers to detain individuals for up to three hours and search them for anything that might be used for escaping or causing physical injury to anyone including themselves. The 2007 Act also introduced biometric immigration document to non-European Union migrants. In February 2008, a new civil penalty scheme came into force to

penalise and imprison employers who knowingly employ illegal workers (Anderson, 2010). The Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009 amended the naturalisation time of people from outside the European Economic Area (EEA). It indicated that they must have eight years of residential status before being eligible for naturalisation. Besides, the Act put five years of married life for naturalisation through marriage.

In May 2014, the Immigration Act 2014 was approved, aiming to ensure that the UK immigration system is 'fairer to British citizens and legitimate migrants and tougher on those with no right to be here' (Home Office, 2014). The Act prohibited property owners from renting houses for individuals disqualified by immigration status or those who do not have leave to enter or remain in the UK. It also prevented illegal immigrants from obtaining bank accounts and driving licenses and authorised the Secretary of State to remove such individuals from the UK. Moreover, the 2014 Act empowered the Secretary of State to revoke naturalised citizenship from individuals considered 'prejudicial' to the UK's vital interests. The Immigration Act 2014 has been heavily criticised by different groups as unfair and discriminatory (Rooney, 2014). Nonetheless, the Immigration Act 2016 strengthened the withdrawal of access to services from illegal immigrants and made provision regarding English language requirements for public sector workers. For example, the Act stipulated, 'A public authority must ensure that each person who works for the public authority in a customer-facing role speaks fluent English' (Immigration Act 2016: 65).

To conclude, since the 1960s, the UK used various Acts to tightened immigration to the country. As seen above, these Acts are aimed to discourage illegal migrants from coming to the UK or to push them to leave voluntarily.

2.4.4 Migration in the UK: From Emigration to Immigration

People have been migrating from and to the UK for centuries. According to Berkeley, Khan and Ambikaipaker (2006), historically the number of UK emigrants was greater than the number of immigrants. Between 1870 and 1913, the annual net emigration of British citizens was 131,000 (Hatton & Price, 1999). This amounted for a net loss of 5.6 million people over the years, reducing the population by 16 percent less than it would have been (Hatton & Price, 1999; Portes, 2015). Hatton and Price (1999) further stated that most of the people were migrating to the United States, Canada, Australia and various British colonies. After the Second World War, the UK received many migrants from East European countries (see also Eade, 2014), but this did not change the net emigration level of the country until the 1970s (Hampshire County Council, 2010; Office for National Statistics, 2016).

Since the beginning of the 1970s, the migration trend in the UK has reversed for three reasons. First, the huge influx of British citizens to the above-stated destinations declined. By the end of the 1940s, Canada and Australia ended some of their preferential treatment to British immigrants (Hatton & Price, 1999). For instance, British immigrants were not able to get free access to Canada after 1948. Moreover, in the 1960s, most of the British colonies got their independence and the remaining ones started to revolt making them not safe for British citizens (Darwin, 2011). Therefore, these situations decreased the movement of British migrants to their colonies.

Second, many people started to come to the UK, mainly from former British colonies and Commonwealth countries (Hampshire County Council, 2010; Office for National Statistics, 2016) as well as from Europe (Hatton & Price, 1999). Darwin (2011) indicated that this was part of the British imperial legacy aimed to promote inclusive imperial citizenship for the

peoples of the British Empire. However, as stated above, the UK openly discriminated against BAME immigrants especially in the 1960s (Dummett, 2001). In line with this, Osman (2013) argued that, although immigrants are accepted to live in the UK, they are still blamed for everything that goes wrong in the country. Yet, all these challenges and tougher immigration laws have not stopped the inflow of migrants to the country. In addition, the enlargement of the European Union in 2004 added ten countries to the group, allowing their citizens to live and work in the UK. This led to a large influx of immigrants from these countries, especially Poland (Somerville, Sriskandarajah & Latorre, 2009).

Third, refugees also contributed to the increasing number of migrants in the UK. The number of asylum applications in the UK has increased significantly since the beginning of the 1980s (Hawkins, 2016). According to the Home Office (2018a), in 1979 the UK had only 1,563 asylum applications. Soon after this, the number increased significantly, reaching its peak in 2002 with 103,081 applications. Then, as indicated in Table 2.1, the number of asylum seekers decreased sharply reaching its two decades lowest point of 22,644 applications in 2010, before climbing again to reach 39,968 in 2015. Between 1979 and 2017, the UK received 1,351,846 asylum applications; out of which 373,198 were approved; 877,802 refused; 72,729 withdrawn; and the rest are still pending (Home Office, 2018a).

Table 2.1 depicts that, despite the tightening immigration policies, long-term international migration to the UK has been increasing. Rienzo and Vargas-Silva (2017) also indicated that, by 2015, the number of foreign nationals living in the UK exceeded five million people. During the same year, the UK had about 8.7 million people born overseas, compared to 3.8 million in 1993 (Rienzo & Vargas-Silva, 2017). Simultaneously, the number of EU immigrants to the UK increased from 0.9 million in 1995 to 3.3 million in 2015 (Wadsworth

et al., 2016). Wadsworth et al. (2016) further stated that the number of EU immigrants in the UK account for 35 percent of the entire immigrants living in the country.

Table 2.1 Annual number of asylum applications from 2000-2015

Year	**Applications**	**Grants**	**Refusals**	**Withdrawals**	**Pending**
2000	98,900	24,780	92,330	2,080	
2001	91,600	40,780	115,120	3,090	
2002	103,081	33,460	69,992	1,825	
2003	60,047	13,183	67,187	2,206	
2004	40,623	6,353	49,039	3,521	
2005	30,841	5,427	27,782	3,442	
2006	28,321	5,043	20,431	2,048	
2007	28,299	6,812	19,851	1,402	
2008	31,313	7,090	16,707	2,992	
2009	30,673	8,387	22,568	3,562	
2010	22,644	6,440	20,008	3,059	14,881
2011	25,898	7,182	15,610	2,608	16,907
2012	27,978	7,797	14,062	2,302	18,916
2013	29,875	8,516	13,918	2,555	23,070
2014	32,344	10,100	15,782	2,515	31,545
2015	39,968	13,944	24,202	3,162	33,990
2016	39,357	9,944	21,067	3,218	32,788
2017	33,512	8,555	19,259	3,392	32,734
Total	**795,274**	**223,793**	**644,915**	**48,979**	

(Home Office, 2018a).

2.5 Eritrea: Country Background

2.5.1 History, Culture and Society

As noted in the previous chapter, Eritrea is a country located in East Africa bordered on the north and west by Sudan, the south by Ethiopia, southeast by Djibouti and the east by the Red Sea. Its strategic location has attracted many colonial powers such as the Ottoman Empire, Egypt and Italy. The Italians established the colony of Eritrea in 1890 (Makki, 2011). However, in 1941, the country was taken by British forces; and after ten years of British administration, in December 1950, the UN General Assembly passed resolution 390A (V) to federate Eritrea with Ethiopia (Araya, 1990; Negash, 1997). Under the federal agreement which came into effect in 1952, Eritrea had its constitution, parliament, flag and official languages (Tigrigna and Arabic). However, by the end of the 1950s, the Ethiopian government started to violate the federal arrangement and fully annexed Eritrea in 1962. This triggered the establishment of the Eritrean Liberation Movement to terminate the Ethiopian rule. Then, after 30 years of bloody war with Ethiopia, Eritrea declared its independence on May 24, 1991.

Figure 2.3 Political map of Eritrea

As stated above, Eritrea has a population of about 5.3 million people (UN, 2019). The people are equally divided into two religions: Christianity and Islam (United States Department of State [USDS], 2017). Furthermore, there are nine ethnic groups in Eritrea: Tigrigna, Tigre, Afar, Bilen, Beni-amir, Kunama, Nara, Rashaida and Saho. Tigrigna (50 percent) and Tigre (30 percent) are the two major groups which make-up about 80 percent of the Eritrean population (European Asylum Support Office, 2015). The other seven ethnic groups cover the remaining 20 percent of the population. Each ethnic group has its own distinctive culture and language. However, it is also important to note that, across ethnicities, Eritreans share many similar values and traditions. For example, most Eritreans give great value to family, seniority and modesty (Cooper & Underwood, 2010). They generally have a strong bond with their extended family and usually help each other socially and economically. In addition, it is normative to respect senior people such as elders and religious leaders. It is also usually socially unacceptable and considered immodest to speak too much about yourself.

Furthermore, the life of the Eritrean people shows a significant change over time. The colonial powers and the nationalist movements affected the socio-economic and political conditions of the people. The Italian recruitment of Eritreans into public services and the military shaped the lifestyles of many citizens and their families (Pool, 1997). Moreover, freedom of speech and assembly and the subsequent formation of six political parties[3] during the British administration influenced the political awareness of Eritreans (Ellingson, 1977; Kidane, 2011). In general, these two colonial powers fostered national consciousness amongst the Eritrean people and the territorial integrity of the country. Later, the Eritrean

[3]The Party for the Love of Country (Mahber Fikri Hager), the Unionist Party, the Moslem League, the National Moslem Party of Massawa, the New Eritrean Pro-Italy Party and the Eritrean Liberal Progressive Party (Ertra n'ertrawian).

Liberation Movement used this sense of nationalism as a stepping-stone to struggle for independence.

The 30-year-long struggle for independence, together with the post-independence period, also strengthened the unity of Eritrean people. The nationalist view of the Eritrean People Liberation Front (EPLF)[4], and the government of Eritrea after independence, cultivated the development of common values such as patriotism and unity, outweighing ethnic, religious or individual interests. For instance, in 1995, the government introduced mandatory 18 months national service programme to establish a strong defence force, strengthen the economy of the country and develop national unity by minimising ethnic and religious dividing lines (Government of Eritrea, 1995). As per the national service proclamation, both women and men between 18 and 40 years are required to do six months of military training and serve for twelve months in the military or civil services of the country. However, as discussed further, many argued that this programme has inflicted a lot of pain on the people (see also Home Office, 2018a; Kibreab, 2002, 2009)

2.5.2 Political Condition: Independence, Border War and the Aftermath

A quarter of a century after independence, Eritrea is a single-party state ruled by President Isaias Afewerki, the man who led EPLF as chairperson or assistant chairperson for about two decades. As indicated above, after 30 years of war, the EPLF liberated Eritrea from Ethiopian occupation in May 1991 and announced the formation of the Provisional Government of Eritrea (PGE). In April 1993, the government conducted a referendum to fully justify the country's independence. The voting, which was considered as free and fair by the UN observer mission, was concluded with 99.8 percent opting for full independence

[4]The EPLF is an armed organisation which led the Eritrean fight to independence.

(Habteselassie, 1998). In 1994, the EPLF renamed itself as People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ) and became a political party.

According to the PFDJ National Charter (1994), the main goals of the party are: national harmony, political democracy, socio-economic development, social justice, cultural revival, and regional and international cooperation. The charter also laid down six basic principles to guide the party's activities. They are national unity, active public participation, human element, linkage between national and social struggles, self-reliance, and a strong relationship between people and leadership. Accordingly, the government of Eritrea started a programme of socio-economic and political transformation. The initial seven years of independence were marked by rapid economic development. In addition, from 1994 to 1997, the country was engaged in drafting a new constitution, which was ratified by the National Assembly in 1997.

However, the process of building a democratic and economically vibrant state was interrupted in 1998 due to the border war with Ethiopia (1998-2000) and its aftermath. From May 1998 to June 2000, Eritrea and Ethiopia engaged in a border war which many referred to as 'Brothers in War' (Negash & Tronvoll, 2000; Wrong, 2005). Considering the small number of the Eritrean population in contrast with Ethiopia's 100 million people (UN, 2019), the war caused the deployment of every Eritrean youth on the frontline. In addition to people's displacement, infrastructure damage and financial loss, the border conflict costed about 100,000 lives between the two countries (Caprile, 2008). After all this loss, both countries signed the Algiers agreement in June 2000 to end the border dispute through the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission [EEBC] (International Crisis Group, 2008).

The EEBC gave its final and binding verdict in April 2002, but Ethiopia rejected the decision since the village 'Badme', the flashpoint for the clash, was given to Eritrea (Caprile, 2008). This led to sixteen years of 'cold war'. There were also minor military conflicts during this period. In general, the border war and the 'no war, no peace' situation affected the life of the people and the youth [from 18 to 40 years old] in particular. The majority of this age group have been in the national service without a proper salary for about two decades. Most of them get a monthly payment of about US $50 (Home Office, 2018a).

Furthermore, the border war and aftermath severely damaged the political development of Eritrea in general and the democratic process in particular. In 2001, the government of Eritrea froze the 1997 constitution and closed the free press in the name of 'national security' (Patterson, 2016; Reid, 2009). It also imprisoned many journalists and senior government officials who demanded political change and implementation of the constitution (Müller, 2008; Patterson, 2016). The government labelled them as 'traitors', accusing them of treason in times of war and national security threat (Woldemikael, 2013). Most of them were detained without any charge or trial, while the rest fled the country to live in exile. The political situation further affected the economic lives of the people as indicated in the next section.

In April 2018, a new leadership headed by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed came to power in Ethiopia. Soon after coming to power, Prime Minister Abiy started rapprochement with Eritrea by accepting the EEBC decision and ending the border conflict, which caused for his 2019 Nobel Peace Prize award (Tronvoll, 2019). However, the political condition in Eritrea has remained unchanged. Hence, people are still leaving the country to seek a better life.

2.5.3 Economic Development

Eritrea is one of the low-income countries of the world. It is a country born out of the long war for self-determination. In addition, the border row with Ethiopia and the UN Security Council (UNSC) sanctions badly affected the economic development of Eritrea. For instance, as can be seen in the graph below (Figure 2.4), GDP growth fell during the border war. Regarding this, Rena stated:

> The May 2000 Ethiopian offensive into northern Eritrea damaged property worth 600 million dollars, including livestock worth 225 million dollars. Nearly 55,000 houses also suffered damages. The attack prevented planting of crops in Eritrea's most productive zobas[5] (Gash Barka and Debub regions), causing food production to drop by 62 percent (2007: 3).

Due to the border war and its aftermath, many parts of the country became militarised zones, with large numbers of land mines, which endangered people and affected their agricultural activities. This worsened the limited agricultural production of the country. Subsistence or rain-fed agriculture is the main activity of the people. In fact, more than 60 percent of Eritreans live in rural areas and depend on farming and herding for their livelihoods (Patterson, 2016). Furthermore, Eritrea is located in an area susceptible to climate variability and drought (Qu, Hao & Qu, 2019; Rena, 2007). The domestic food production covers a limited amount of the domestic need, posing a great challenge to the country's economic recovery (for example, see Rena, 2007). In general, the agriculture sector of the country meets about 60-70 percent of the food needs of the people (World Bank, 2018).

[5] Eritrean is divided into six administrative regions (zobas).

Moreover, in 2009 and 2011, the UNSC imposed two economic sanctions on Eritrea, claiming that the country was destabilising the Horn of Africa region (UN, 2011). The first aimed to freeze funds, financial assets and economic resources belonging to senior PFDJ, military and government officials (UN, 2009), whilst the second was targeted to prevent the 'diaspora tax' paid by Eritreans living abroad (UN, 2011). This tax means that Eritreans living abroad are required to pay a '2 percent' income tax in order to get consular, social or other services from the Eritrean government, at home or abroad. The UNSC claimed that the government of Eritrea was using the diaspora tax to support Somalia's armed group, Al-Shabaab. In contrast, the Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group (SEMG)[6] repeatedly concluded that it could not find any evidence of Eritrea's support to Al-Shabaab (UN, 2016, 2018). In October 2018, the Monitoring Group reported:

> For the fifth consecutive year, the Monitoring Group found no evidence of Eritrean support for Al-Shabaab. The Monitoring Group also found no evidence of large shipments of weapons or ammunition to or from Eritrea in violation of the two-way arms embargo (UN, 2018).

Despite these reports, the sanctions continued until 2018, when Ethiopia accepted the EEBC ruling. It is likely that the sanction severely affected the economy of the country, as diaspora tax is one of the main sources of income for the government (Healy, 2007; Kirk, 2010; Laub, 2015).

[6]SEMG was set up by the UN Security Council to monitor the case of Eritrea and Somalia.

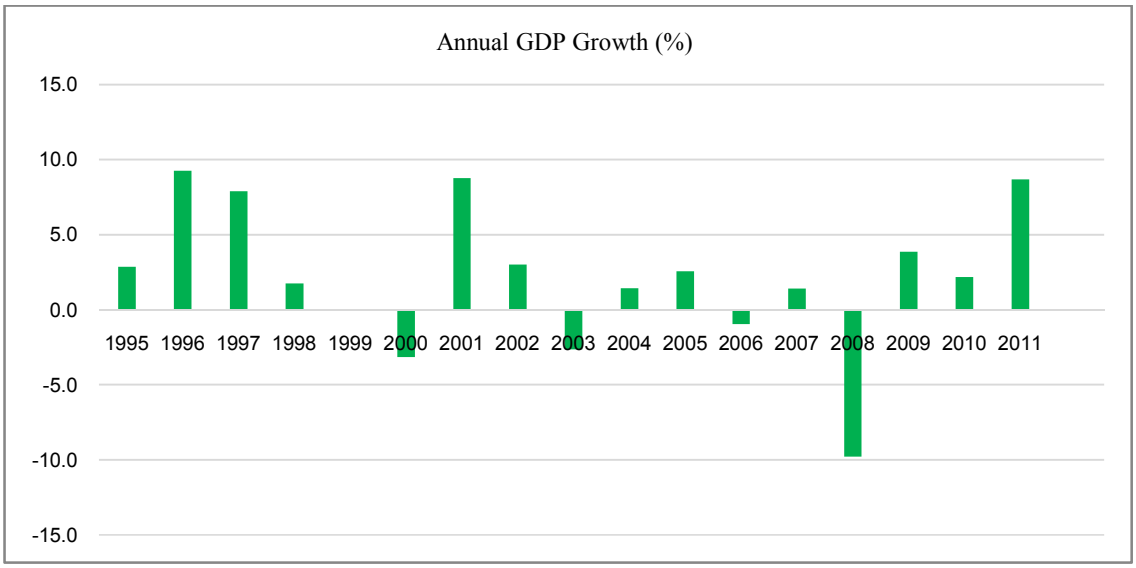

Figure 2.4 Annual GDP Growth (%) of Eritrea from 1995 to 2011(World Bank, 2019)

In 2011 and 2012, the economy of Eritrea experienced considerable growth, mainly due to the mining sector and the high price of gold at that time (World Bank, 2018). Mining attracted many foreign investors from different countries such as Australia, Canada and China (TesfaNews, 2013). This, to some extent, eased the challenges posed by the UNSC sanctions and allowed for rapid economic growth in the country. In fact, the World Bank reported that Eritrea was the world's fastest-growing economy in the world for the year 2011. This statement was corroborated by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) which confirmed Eritrea's GDP growth of about 9 percent in 2011 (Finfacts Team, 2010) and 7 percent in 2012 (Nyende & Okumu, 2014). Nevertheless, the GDP growth did not continue smoothly. It dropped sharply to 1 percent in 2013 and 2 percent in 2014, largely due to agricultural failures and foreign-exchange shortages (Nyende & Okumu, 2014).

As shown in Figure 2.5, the annual GDP per capita of Eritrea increased constantly between 2005 and 2011, which was recorded at US $583. Yet, these same figures revealed that it was one of the fifteen nations with the lowest GDP per capita in the world (World Bank, 2019).

Furthermore, considering the high cost of living there, Eritreans have a low standard of living. In support of this argument, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) reported that the value of Eritrea's Human Development Index (HDI) for 2017 was 0.440, ranking 179 out of 189 countries (UNDP, 2018). This makes Eritrea one of the ten countries in the lowest human development category.

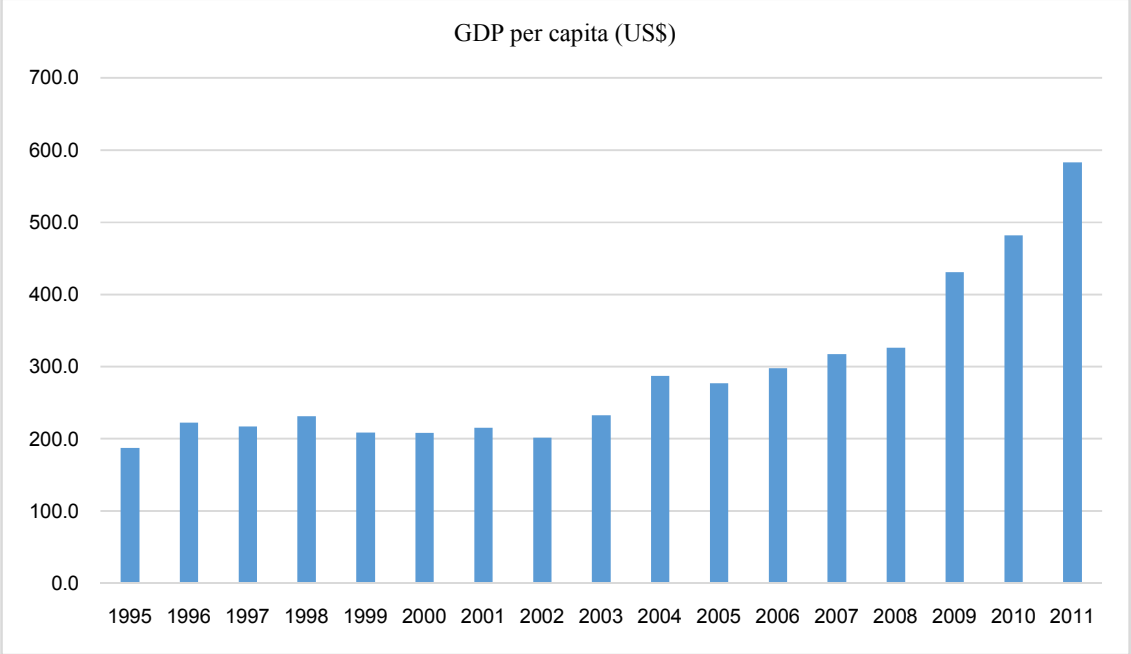

Figure 2.5 GDP per capita of Eritrea from 1995 to 2011 in US$ (World Bank, 2019)

2.5.4 Higher Education

As part of the nation-building process, the government of Eritrea has expanded various social services, including education, across the country (Ministry of Education, 2012; Rena, 2006; Tsegay, Zegergish & Ashraf, 2018). The government built many new schools and trained hundreds of teachers. As a result, within the past two decades of independence, student enrolment at elementary, junior and secondary levels increased by 400 percent. Furthermore, the government restructured the higher education system of the country with the claim to

expand access and, thus, enable citizens to fully participate in the socio-economic and political affairs of their nation and the world (Ministry of Education, 2012).

At the time of independence, and up to 2003, Eritrea had only one HEI, the University of Asmara, which was situated in the capital city, Asmara. It was established in 1958by the Missionary Congregation 'Piae Madres Nigritiae' (Comboni Sisters) under the name 'the Catholic College of the Santa Famiglia' (Leonida, 2004). By 1964, the institution was renamed as 'University of Asmara'; in the same year English was adopted as the medium of instruction along with Italian, and in 1977 English became the sole medium of instruction. In 2004, the university also established the School of Graduate Studies and started graduate programmes in six fields of study (Rena, 2008). However, from 2004 to 2005, the government closed the University of Asmara. Instead, it created seven HEIs in order to expand access to higher education (Ministry of Information, 2006). Accordingly, all the human and material resources of the University of Asmara were allocated to the new HEIs.

The restructuring of the higher education increased the number of students enrolling in higher education from 5,934 in the year 2003 (Leonida, 2004) to 13,779 in 2013 (NBHE, 2013). In addition, the number of academic programmes and faculty increased tremendously. For instance, in the academic year 2002/2003, the University of Asmara had 254 academic staff and 39 departments offering various undergraduate programmes. By 2013, the number of academic staff rose to 620, while the number of programmes offered reached 53 degree and 43 diploma programmes. Despite these improvements, there are many challenges that need to be addressed to widen participation and improve the quality of HEIs. In addition to the lack of human and material resources (Tsegay, 2016a; Tsegay, Zegergish & Ashraf, 2018), Eritrea's tertiary education enrolment is still in its infancy, and the proportion of those,

especially women, in higher education is very low. The 2016 tertiary education GER in Eritrea was recorded at 3.36 percent --3.93 percent for men and 2.79 percent for women (UNESCO, 2019).

Furthermore, many Eritreans are not happy with the closure of the University of Asmara and some have publicly spoken or written about it (see Kidane, 2017; Tsegai, 2016). This was also a concern expressed by most of my participants. They are not convinced by the government's argument that the closure of the University was necessary in order to use its human and material resources for the newly established HEIs. In contrast, they believe that the closure of the University of Asmara was politically motivated. They claim that there was no need to close the reputable and internationally recognised existing university to open new HEIs. It would have been possible to open satellite colleges under the umbrella of the university to expand access to higher education.

Additionally, many argued that the closure of the university was in reaction to the 2001 students' protest. In summer 2001, University of Asmara students opposed participating in the summer work programme planned by the government, due to low pay on offer (BBC, 2001; Müller, 2008). Hence, as stated earlier, the government arrested about 2,000 university students and detained them for a month and a half in eastern lowlands where the temperature reaches about 45 degree Celsius (Kigotho, 2001; Last, 2001). This caused the death of two students (BBC, 2001). Subsequently, the government started to build new colleges; and in 2003, all starting students were allocated to the newly built college, Eritrea Institute of Technology (EIT), under the supervision of military personnel.

The militarisation of higher education and the political situation of the country caused the erosion of academic freedom. At first, the administrative wing of EIT, including the Vice President for Administrative Affairs, was staffed with military officers (Müller, 2008). EIT in many ways resembled 'more a military camp than a place of higher learning' (Müller, 2014). However, with the establishment of other HEIs and the Provisional Committee for the Coordination of Higher Education (PCCHE) in 2006, a decentralised system of administration was introduced in the HEIs. Then, the National Board for Higher Education (NBHE)[7] was formed in 2008 to lead the development of higher education in the country by promoting quality education and research programmes (NBHE, 2009).

Despite its short duration, the presence of military personnel impacted the academic freedom in the HEIs (Müller, 2008), and caused the migration of many HEI teachers (Tsegay, 2019). In addition, given that the government censors freedom of speech, academic freedom can hardly exist (Downs, 2009). Hence, many academics lack the confidence to discuss or explore issues that might challenge the government's policies or decisions. They take the case of journalists who challenged the governments' policies as a warning. As noted above, in 2001, the government of Eritrea banned all independent newspapers and imprisoned most of its journalists (Berhane, 2016).

2.5.5 Migration: the Eritrean Diaspora

The history of Eritrean migration is one that has lasted for many decades. The exodus of Eritreans before independence was mainly associated with its historical context, particularly the annexation of Eritrea by Ethiopia and the struggle for independence. With the intensification of the armed struggle for self-determination, the Ethiopian government under

[7]The NBHE changed its name to National Commission for Higher Education (NCHE) in 2015, and renamed as National Higher Education and Research Institute (NHER) in 2018.

Haile Selassie and later Colonel Mengistu Haile-mariam started to detain and kill Eritreans and burn villages. As a result, between 1965 and 1990, thousands of Eritreans either fled the country fearing persecution from the Ethiopian government or joined the armed struggle to fight for independence. For instance, in the first half of 1967, the Ethiopian army burned 62 villages and killed 402 civilians, causing 25,500 Eritreans to migrate to Sudan (De Waal, 1991). Moreover, the 1975 massacre at Umm Hajer in western Eritrea drove 'nearly 40,000 refugees into Sudan in one week' (Ahmed & Akins, 2012). Generally, before independence, there were thousands of Eritrean refugees scattered all over the world, about 450,000 of them living in Sudan (Farwell, 2001; Kibreab, 2002). Many of them saw Sudan as a temporary abode and sought to return when Eritrea gained its independence (Kibreab, 2000). Accordingly, about 180,000 Eritrean refugees (including 139,000 from Sudan) returned within the first seven years of independence (Bascom, 2005).

However, Eritrea is again back in the spotlight for refugees with '507,300 refugees at the end of 2018, an increase from end-2017 when this population stood at 486, 200' (UNHCR, 2018: 17). The country has been one of the top ten countries of origin for asylum seekers in the past decade (UNHCR, 2008, 2009, 2013a, 2014, 2015, 2018). In 2012, Eritrea was the source country of 306,000 refugees (UNHCR, 2013a), as compared to 363,200 refugees in 2014 (UNHCR, 2015). Furthermore, the number increased to 459,400 refugees in 2016, showing a 12 percent increase from 2015 (UNHCR, 2016). These refugees are hosted by many countries in different parts of the world. The UNHCR (2016: 19) report stated:

> Most Eritrean refugees were hosted by Ethiopia (165,500) and Sudan (103,200), but many also sought protection farther away, such as in Germany (30,000), Israel (27,800), Switzerland (26,300), and Sweden (26,000).

Likewise, in the past decade, Eritreans have been among the top ten asylum-seeking nationalities in the UK (Home Office, 2015; Sturge, 2019; Walsh, 2019). For instance, 'Eritreans were the largest group granted asylum in the UK between 2006 and 2008 and in 2014' (Sturge, 2019: 12). They also constituted one of the two major asylum applicant nationalities in the UK in 2014 and 2015 (Home Office, 2015). Generally, Eritreans flee their country for socio-economic and political reasons (Tessema, 2010; Tessema & N'goma, 2009); and they are more likely to be granted asylum for reasons such as indefinite military conscription and political oppression (Sturge, 2019). Sturge (2019) reported that 92 percent of the 25,385 Eritreans who applied for asylum in the European Union in 2017 were granted refugee status. Indeed, this amount makes the second-largest asylum recognition rate of the year after Syrians (94 percent). Somalis held the third stage with 70 percent grant rate of the 17,645 asylum applicants in the same year.

The government of Eritrea blames the international community for youth emigration. It accused the international community for their failure to pressure Ethiopia to accept the EEBC decision, imposing unjustified sanctions on Eritrea, and granting automatic asylum to Eritreans (Bereketeab, 2016). The government has tried to halt the exile of Eritreans by restricting their movement. It requires its citizens to obtain an exit visa to travel to other countries and detains anyone caught leaving the country without one (USDS, 2018). In addition, the government puts pressure on the families of those who leave without exit visa. The families have been detained or heavily fined (Amnesty International, 2013; Arapiles, 2015). Nonetheless, all these measures have done little to curb youth migration from the country.

Generally, in Eritrea, the number of men emigrants is higher than women. According to the IOM, women constitute about half of all international migrants in OECD countries (IOM, 2014). The report further indicated that the number of highly educated women migrants rose by 80 percent between 2000 and 2011, as compared to 60 percent increase for men in the same period. However, for Eritrean migrants, the situation is not proportional. There are fewer female than male migrants. For example, in 2017 only 19 percent of the total 1,085 Eritrean asylum applicants in the UK were females (Home Office, 2018a). Lijnders (2018) also noted that 'out of 37,000 people seeking asylum in Israel today, around 7,000 are women'. As indicated above, women in several developing countries are restricted from migrating due to traditional gender roles (Scott & Clery, 2013) and fear of rape and mistreatment during their journeys (Ratha, Mohapatra & Scheja, 2011). The irony is that women face mistreatment even in their home countries.

Women in several African countries including Eritrea are subjected to social discrimination and oppression (Al-Ali, Black & Koser, 2001; Wester, 2009). The USDS explained, 'Family, labour, property, nationality, and inheritance laws [of Eritrea] provide men and women the same status and rights' (USDS, 2018: 19). Yet men retain higher social value and position of authority both in public and private spaces in the country (Ajygin, 2010). Besides, gender roles in families are set, with certain behaviours and roles associated with each sex (Walker, 1999). In this context, migration does not only increase the economic opportunity and independence for women; it also provides a better environment in which they can start anew. Of course, this needs significant participation by men in family lives in general, and care practices and domestic roles in particular (Choi, 2019). Unless this happens, migration leads to greater domestic engagement and downward occupational mobility for women (Ho, 2006). So far, just as with women all over the world, women migrants are more likely to experience

sexual harassment and forms of victimisation than men (Kawar, 2004; Palumbo & Sciurba, 2018). Moreover, employed women are more likely than men to face career interruptions and less likely to experience career progression (Shah & Shah, 2016).

Furthermore, migration decisions, including where to migrate, are made with consideration of future life course events such as family formation and child rearing (Kulu & Milewski, 2007). Many migrants are single, while others have their own family. As already discussed, many migrants leave their family behind for safety and other reasons. They want to be reunited when they reach their destination. In fact, UNHCR (2013b) reported that family reunification is one of the main issues that concern migrants. They consider family as a central component in their struggle to fit-in their host country (Beaton, Musgrave & Liebl, 2018). Not quite different from this, Cooke (2008: 262) stated that migration research should embrace the family as 'a central component of migration, or rather that family migration should move front and centre in discussions regarding migration in general'. This does not mean that migration research should ignore single migrants. However, it reflects that family formation, including marriage, child raising and family relationships, affects the socio-cultural integration of migrants.

2.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I described my research context by analysing the main concepts and context of this study. Through Lee's (1966) push and pull model, I demonstrated that migration is caused by local and global factors. I also outlined the distinctive features of refugees from other migrants such as economic migrants. Refugees are left with no option, but to flee their original place for their own safety (Bauman, 1996). However, many choose their destination country based on the asylum recognition rate (James & Mayblin, 2016) and socio-economic

opportunities (Brădăţan & Kulcsár, 2014; Docquier & Rapoport, 2008) the country offers. Hence, they travel a long, risky and costly journey to reach those countries (IOM, 2017; Llanni, 2016).

Moreover, I reviewed the role of education for socio-cultural integration, arguing that education plays an important role at many stages of an individual's migration including at the integration stage within a host country. It enables them to appreciate or tolerate diversity and foster their integration and cooperation with the host society (Brădăţan & Kulcsár, 2014; Fokkema & de Haas, 2011; Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007; Marginson, 2010; Torres, 1998, 2002). Nonetheless, I also noted that educational qualification is a single component in a large picture of migrants (Bailey & Mulder, 2017). This is important to see the advantages that highly educated migrants get, and their vulnerability such as the race or gender-based labour market segmentation and discrimination they face in the host countries (Garrido & Codó, 2017; Fokkema & de Haas, 2011; Hayter, 2016; Riach & Rich, 1991; Wood et al., 2009).

In addition, I analysed the role of UK immigration policy in dealing with asylum seekers and other immigrants. Finally, I discussed the socio-economic and political context of Eritrea. In doing so, I outlined the connection between the condition of the country and the migration of citizens. The next chapter focuses on cultural globalisation and socio-cultural integration approaches.

CHAPTER THREE

CULTURAL GLOBALISATION AND SOCIO-CULTURAL INTEGRATION APPROACHES

> I suggest that 'identities' exist today solely in the process of continuous renegotiation. 'Identity formation', or more correctly its 're-formation', turns into a lifelong task, never complete; at no moment of life is the identity 'final'. There always remains an outstanding task of readjustment, since neither the conditions of life nor the sets of opportunities and the nature of threats ever stop changing. That in-built 'non-finality', the incurable inconclusiveness of the task of self-identification, causes a lot of tension and anxiety. For that anxiety, there is no easy remedy (Bauman, 2011: 431).

3.1 Introduction

In the previous two chapters, I introduced the dissertation as a whole by looking at the rationale, background and research questions. I also discussed some basic concepts and contexts of the study including the Eritrean context and the UK immigration phases to broaden readers' understanding of the case under study. This chapter reviews the relevant literature on cultural globalisation and socio-cultural integration to 'acquire an understanding of the topic, of what has already been done on it, how it has been researched, and what the key issues are' (Hart, 1998: 1). Furthermore, the literature review is expected to advance knowledge by facilitating theory development and identifying areas where excessive or little research exists (Webster & Watson, 2002).

The basic argument of this chapter is that living in a different culture is not only exciting, it is also challenging. Immigrants need to integrate into the social and cultural conditions of their

host country to access basic services. Nevertheless, different local and global factors affect the social-cultural integration of migrants (Bauman, 1996; Stewart, 2005; Wiese, 2010; Zimmermann, 1995). Moreover, it must be understood that culture is fluid (Grossberg, 1996; Hall, 1990, 1996). This might seem obvious as the world is changing in all dimensions: socially, culturally and economically. Here, I discuss the cultural changes that happen due to migration and the need for socio-cultural integration. I argue that, without totally losing their original identity, immigrants can develop a new cultural identity to integrate into a new environment. This opens ways to explore the factors that affect the socio-cultural integration of migrants, which might also shape the migrants' cultural identities.

Therefore, I searched and read various resources to get a thorough understanding of these issues. However, not all of the resources I read are included here as I carefully selected my literature review to meet the objectives of the study. I followed Hart's (2018) steps of writing a literature review: searching for relevant sources, reading with a purpose, extracting materials on a theme basis, and finally writing up the review. Accordingly, this chapter revolves around three central concepts: 1) globalisation, 2) culture and 3) socio-cultural integration, which are of paramount importance in understanding my participants' realities and experiences.

3.2 Globalisation and the Two Different Perspectives

Hopper (2007) noted that globalisation is not a new phenomenon; it can be traced back to early human migration. However, the intensification of socio-economic and political interdependence between countries has put globalisation to a higher level where it can affect every nation-state and the world in general (Crane, 2011; Hopper, 2007; Movius, 2010). Globalisation is a contested terrain which has attracted different policy and scholarly

definitions (see Giddens, 1990; Hopper, 2007; Torres, 2002). While acknowledging the contested nature of the concept, I concur with Anthony Giddens's view that globalisation is 'the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa' (Giddens, 1990: 64). This indicates that socio-economic and political changes, which occur in one country, affect others. Therefore, it could be argued that countries in the world are connected by a series of events even if they happen far from their borders.

Scholars mainly focus on the causes and effects of globalisation. Many agree that globalisation is the outcome of rapid global communications (Crane, 2011; Hopper, 2007; Movius, 2010; Torres, 2002). However, the role of globalisation in the convergence or divergence of societies is a debatable issue. Some argue that globalisation is increasing the homogeneity of societies, whereas others claim that it is increasing the hybridisation of culture, and diversity (Kellner, 1997; Torres, 2002; Wang, 2007). In addition, the debate includes the response of governments to the process of globalisation. Such debates mainly occur between those who perceive globalisation as a threat to the power and autonomy of nation-states, and its proponents (Giddens, 1990; Movius, 2010; Stromquist, 2002). Many would argue that the two competing views of globalisation are significant. Globalisation, in many ways, is improving the living standard of societies and expanding the notion of freedom, democracy and human rights (Torres, 2002). Yet, as indicated in the previous chapter, intensifying global conflict, economic competition, social stratification, crime, terrorism and environmental issues are some of the discourses used by its critics (Burbules & Torres, 2000; Gadotti, 1996; Huysmans & Buonfino, 2008; Martin & Martin, 2004; Young, 2017).

Regardless of these debates, one major issue that resonates with me is that nation-states could not avoid the process of globalisation. With increasing economic integration and technological advancement, it would be impossible (if not difficult) to avoid or stop the interaction and integration between people, companies, and governments of different countries (see Movius, 2010). It is important to note that eventually the process of globalisation influences nation-states. Therefore, political forces must find out ways to engage in making the best use of globalisation, while reducing its negative effects.

The globalisation debate is not hypothetical, but it is a deliberation on the lives of people. One issue that many critics and advocates of globalisation differ on is migration. For instance, President Donald Trump is set to limit immigration especially undocumented and Muslim immigrants from entering the USA (Cummings, 2018; Young, 2017). Moreover, in opposition to the advocates of globalisation, Trump said, 'A globalist is a person that wants the globe to do well, frankly, not caring about our country so much. And you know what? We cannot have that' (Cited in Cummings, 2018). I believe that this is self-centred thinking and it could have a huge implication in the world. Of course, the globalists are not ignorant of the negative sides of globalisation, but they emphasise that globalisation results in more benefit than harm. However, considering the global influence of the USA, Trump's argument could licence similar perceptions in other countries. Above all, along with many scholars, I argue that people are swayed by 'post-truth' politics where objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion or personal beliefs (Jaques, Islar & Lord, 2019; Llorente, 2017). Indeed, post-truth discourse is increasing with the intensification of the internet in general and social media platforms in particular. In support of this, Llorente (2017: 9) stated that 'personal belief' is the common denominator for many of the recent

global political developments such as Brexit and Trump's controversial victory in the USA election.

Furthermore, Movius (2010: 7) pointed out that the globalisation debate represents 'a dialectical process, which can both integrate and fragment, creating both winners and losers' of the modern world. This can be seen from different dimensions of globalisation. Globalisation, as a multidimensional process, is divided into different categories such as economic, cultural, technological and political globalisation (Crane, 2011; Movius, 2010, Torres, 2002). As this thesis focuses on the socio-cultural integration of migrants, I analyse the issue of winners and losers with regard to the concept 'migration'. Taking into account the nature of the migrants and the source and destination countries, Zygmunt Bauman's analysis of the *Tourists and vagabonds* (Bauman, 1996, 1997, 1998) explains the condition of refugees, especially those from the Global South or developing countries.

In his book *Liquid Modernity*, Bauman (2012) argued that people's lives are changing with time, but there are some similarities shared across modern lives. The elements of modernity such as rapid urbanisation, technology/communication and industrialism eventually change their form becoming post-modern. Nevertheless, some features such as fragility, temporariness, vulnerability and inclination to constant change unite both modernity and postmodernity, making postmodernity an essential feature of modernity. In addition, as new structures often replace the previous ones, Bauman chose to call postmodernity as 'liquid modernity' to indicate that 'change is the only permanence, and uncertainty the only certainty' (2012: viii). He also explained liquid modernity in relation to solid modernity.

> To cut a long story short, if it is in its 'solid' phase the heart of the modernity was in controlling and fixing the future, in the 'liquid' phase the prime concern moved to ensuring the future was not mortgaged, and to averting the threat of any pre-emptive exploitation of the still undisclosed, unknown and unknowable opportunities the future was hoped to and was bound to bring (Bauman, 2012: x).

Bauman further used liquid modernity to articulate the socio-political and economic changes in the world. In doing so, he wrote various books and articles concerning the connection of liquid modernity to education, culture, migration and other condition of societies (see Bauman, 1996, 1997, 1998, 2000, 2005, 2011, 2012). He argued that the speed of movements is one of the major factors of social stratification. 'In liquid modernity it is the most elusive, those free to move without notice, who rule' (Bauman, 2000: 120). In other words, those with more freedom of choice are the privileged ones and retain a higher rank in the postmodern social hierarchy. Moreover, as indicated in my previous chapter, Bauman explained the effect of liquid modernity in the polarisation of societies into heroes and victims: tourists and vagabonds (Bauman, 1996, 1997, 1998). The following table explains the differences between tourists and vagabonds, which are the metaphors of the contemporary world.

Table 3.1 The differences between tourists and vagabonds

Tourists	Vagabonds
They embark on their travels by choice	Are forced (pushed from behind) to move
They move because they find the world irresistibly attractive	Move because they find the world unbearably inhospitable
They stay or move at their hearts' desire	Nowhere they stop are welcomed
They have freedom of choice	Freedom, autonomy and independence invariably come in the future tense
They are protected	The world is not hospitable for them

(Bauman, 1996, 1997, 1998).

Generally, the main difference lies in the fact that the tourists move because they want to, whereas the vagabonds have no other choice. Besides, countries often set up immigration laws that provide 'green light for the tourists, red light for the vagabonds' (Bauman, 1998: 93). However, even though they are resented, resisted and rejected, illegal migration and human trafficking make the vagabonds unstoppable (Bauman, 2011). Therefore, it is critical to explore the effect of the globalisation debates in the socio-cultural integration of migrants. Moreover, my study looks beyond the dichotomy of tourists and vagabonds. Is there a way that the tourists turn to become the vagabonds and vice versa? If yes, how? These are important points addressed in this study.

3.3 Culture and Cultural Globalisation

Many studies show that culture is a multidimensional concept which affects the variation or interaction of societies (Bauman. 1997; Grossberg, 1996; Hall, 1990, 1996; Hoyle, 1998; Williams, 1961). Spencer-Oatey stated, 'In 1952, the American anthropologists, Kroeber and

Kluckhohn, critically reviewed concepts and definitions of culture, and compiled a list of 164 different definitions' (2008: 3). In addition, Johnson (1986) noted that cultural studies must be interdisciplinary because their complexity cannot be fully grasped in a single academic discipline. These points indicate that culture is one of the complex terms to define. In fact, Williams asserted that 'culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language' (1976: 87). However, this does not mean that no one has defined culture. In 1871, Tylor defined culture as 'that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society' (1871: 1). Ninety years later, Williams analysed and defined culture in relation to ideal, documentary and social categories.

Table 3.2 Definitions of culture

Category	Definition of culture
Ideal	A state or process of human perfection, in terms of certain absolute or universal values
Documentary	The body of intellectual and imaginative work, in which, in a detailed way, human thought and experience are variously recorded
Social	A description of a particular way of life, which expresses certain meanings and values not only in art and learning but also in institutions and ordinary behaviour

(Williams, 1961: 57).

Many of the definitions of culture have some similarities (Bennett, 2015). For this study, I borrow Spencer-Oatey's (2008, 2012) work which places two important features in defining culture. First, culture is a set of basic assumptions, values, beliefs, thinking patterns and

behaviours that are learned and shared by a group of people. Second, it influences every member's behaviour as well as their interpretation or understanding of the meaning of other people's behaviour.

Spencer-Oatey's (2008) proposition indicates that there are cultural variations between different groups of people (see also Hoyle, 1998; Williams, 1961). For instance, Hoyle (1998) argued that the concept of culture includes symbolic forms and historical memories (such as religion, art and history) that constitute a particular cultural activity representing national identity. Nevertheless, culture is also fluid and open to external influences (Bauman. 1997; Grossberg, 1996; Hall, 1990, 1996). The dynamic nature of culture adds new ideas and principles to the existing values and traditions of a particular society. Moreover, people can learn about different cultures which allows them to create new cultural identities in order to work and interact with individuals from different cultural groups. Williams has nicely put this as follows:

> But, further, there is not only variation between cultures, but the individuals who bear these particular cultural rules are capable of altering and extending them, bringing in new or modified rules by which an extended or different reality can be experienced. Thus, new areas of reality can be revealed or created, and these need not be limited to anyone individual, but can, in certain interesting ways, be communicated, thus adding to the set of rules carried by the particular culture (1961: 34).

Furthermore, the word culture comes up in different categories to indicate varied meanings (Hoyle, 1998; Pieterse, 2015). For example, youth culture, Islamic culture, gay culture, rural culture, modern culture and Hispanic culture are used to represent age, religion, gender, place

time and people respectively. In this sense, individuals can be members of different cultural groups. In addition, culture is used interchangeably with nation, race and ethnicity (Spencer-Oatey, 2012). However, these categories might not represent everyone within the group. It is important to consider the multiple cultures that exist in a nation when speaking about national culture. The same is true for other cultural identifications which are based on gender, race and other groups. For example, African American culture does not represent all blacks in the USA (Spencer-Oatey, 2012). However, this does not mean that people should not look at cultural differences or categories. It rather suggests that they need to be careful and recognise the different subcultures such as the diversity of norms and lifestyles within the big culture.

Many scholars argued that understanding cultural differences is important to facilitate global interactions (Erdman, 2017; Hofstede, 2001; Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010). Culture-level studies can be useful to understand societies and their attitudes towards a particular behaviour. In this line, Hofstede (1980, 2001) studied national cultural differences by measuring society's values; and his cultural dimensions[8] model paved the way for more scientific cross-cultural studies. Moreover, Spencer-Oatey (2012: 18) proposed:

> If we are interested in explaining the differences across national cultures, then we must treat each culture as a single unit, and rely only on indices that characterise each nation as a whole, such as measures reflecting average values, wealth, health, climate or demographic profile.

This and other similar arguments serve as a basis to understand cultural differences between nations. Some scholars further explored cultural distinctions between continents.

[8]Hofstede identified six dimensions for comparing cultures: power distances among members of a society, uncertainty avoidance, individualistic/collectivistic orientations, masculinity/femininity, long-term/short-term orientations, and indulgence/self-restraint.

Accordingly, Jenkins (2007), Kenyatta (2015) and others tried to differentiate the cultural values or principles between Africans and Europeans. Such comparison might be exaggerated and risks homogenising both groups, but it could also provide a basic understanding of the major cultural variations in conducting any activity. Kenyatta (2015) listed fourteen culture-based differences between Africans and Europeans. Similarly, Jenkins (1991, 2007) identified seven basic concepts where African and European worldviews differ. Jenkins (2007) and Kenyatta (2015) concur on viewing Africans as communalistic and present-centred. However, they argued that Europeans are individualistic and futurists who spend their resources including time and money to understand and prepare for things that might happen in the future.

In addition, Jenkins (2007) explained that Africans often hold religious and sprit-oriented perceptions of the world, in comparison to the secular and scientific viewpoints which tend to prevail among Europeans. He also stated that, for Africans, reality is based on relationship and experience (see also Nussbaum, 2003). In contrast, facts and measurable phenomena are the sources of truth for Europeans. The following are some of the main differences between African and European worldviews stated by scholars.

Table 3.3 African versus European cultures

Authors	African	European
Higgs (2012), Jenkins (2007), Kenyatta (2015), and Nussbaum (2003)	Communalistic	Individualistic
Jenkins (2007) and Kenyatta (2015)	Now-centric/present	Futurist
Jenkins (2007)	Religious/sprit-oriented	Rational/ scientific
Higgs (2012), Kenyatta (2015) and Nussbaum (2003)	Multigenerational family units	Nuclear family units
Baloyi (2013) and Kenyatta (2015)	Polygamous	Monogamous
Kenyatta (2015)	Eldership is sacred	Youth is worshipped

These cultural differences seem to be overgeneralised. As an Eritrean, all (if not most) of the above African cultural values and principles should be pertinent to me. However, some of them do not represent my culture or worldview. I concur that Eritrean culture is communalistic and focuses on multigenerational family unit. In addition, Eritreans give great value and care for elders that are viewed as an 'important duty' of the younger generation (Cooper & Underwood, 2010). Many Eritreans are also monogamous and share some European lifestyles. Moreover, I believe that many of the above points could not be generalisable to all Europeans. Besides, as indicated above, globalisation allows for cultural diversity.

While many of the above differences might not be perfect, it is important to stress that culture could be divided into many categories such as local, national and global culture (Spencer-Oatey, 2012; Pieterse, 2015). Yet, personal, social and global factors create a common thread

allowing people to identify with multiple cultures. Culture is a socially constructed phenomenon (Spencer-Oatey, 2012). It is learned, and subject to change (Martinas & Ellinger, 1994; Spencer-Oatey, 2012). It can be diffused to different groups of people through various ways such as travelling, media and educational programmes. People often travel from one place to another for socio-economic, educational and political reasons. In doing so, they learn new social and cultural values and attitudes, while diffusing their own to the new society (Bhugra & Becker, 2005). Thus, globalisation in general and cultural globalisation in particular serves as the gateway for the transfer as well as the production of new cultural identifications across the globe (Crane, 2011; Marginson, 2010; Pieterse, 2015; Rhoads & Torres, 2006; Suárez-Orozco, 2001; Torres, 2002; Wang, 2007).

According to Crane (2011: 1), cultural globalisation refers to 'cross-border flows of national and transnational cultures'. It is the emergence of shared values and beliefs around the world (Castells, 2009). In his book *understanding cultural globalisation*, Hopper (2007) stated that there is a close connection between cultural globalisation and other dimensions of globalisation such as economic, political, and technological globalisations. The process of globalisation has not only made societies dependent on each other, but it also allowed for a global mixture of cultures. Besides, economic integration and technological advancement have blurred local and national boundaries and intensified global transfer of ideas, knowledge and experiences (Stromquist, 2002; Torres, 2002).

As stated above, people who travel outside of their borders for different purposes often learn new cultural rules and roles from the societies they interact with. Moreover, through the production of standardised consumer goods, globalisation facilitates the creation of worldwide cultural conformity (Pieterse, 1994, 2015). Standardised fashion clothes, food

products and educational programmes are evident examples which connect international and local cultures. Such cultural standardisation could be better understood with global localisation or 'glocalisation', a concept which refers to the blending of global and local cultures (Eade, 1997; Pieterse, 1996, 2015). For instance, in the glocalisation of cuisine, restaurants often twist foreign food to adapt themselves in the local market and cultures.

In addition, there is a deliberate transfer of culture through education and cultural exchange programmes. Cultural diplomacy, the exchange of cultures to promote socio-cultural and economic development, is one evident example and means of international relations. According to Patricia Goff, cultural diplomacy springs from two premises:

> First, that good relations can take root in the fertile ground of understanding and respect. Second, cultural diplomacy rests on the assumption that art, language, and education are among the most significant entry points into a culture (Goff, 2013: 2).

This shows that culture is an integral part of countries' foreign policy. It is usually associated with the soft power of the countries: the influence they have over the behaviour of other states or citizens (Ang, Isar & Mar, 2015; Clarke, 2016). In addition, people can learn different values, traditions and languages through arts and educational programmes (Ang, Isar & Mar, 2015). Many African countries, for example, use a foreign language as a medium of instruction. They also teach their students including university students about foreign culture and history. Nevertheless, research reveals that different factors such as age at arrival, educational qualification and provision of adequate support influence the speed and interest of people in learning a new culture (see Aslund, Bohlmark & Nordstrom Skans, 2009; Martinas & Ellinger, 1994; Schlossberg, 1981, 2011). In this regard, those with higher

educational qualification could have a better opportunity to learn a new culture and, thus, integrate into their new environment faster (Brădăţan & Kulcsár, 2014). This is also pertinent to migrants because they are required to integrate into a new culture and environment.

There is a very close connection between culture and migration (Howard, 2000; Wiese, 2010). As stated in the previous chapter, migration brings important adjustments in the psychological and cultural developmental processes of individuals, affecting their cultural identity (Wiese, 2010). Similarly, Howard (2000) explained that cultural identities are socially constructed. People produce identity through their daily interactions. However, it must be remembered that cultural identity is not a unified phenomenon; it is interactive (Grossberg, 1996; Hall, 1996). This suggests that cultural identity shares many common points with culture. Hence, it is significant to explain the concept of identity in general and cultural identity in particular to understand the experiences of migrants. Indeed, Hall (1996) used the concept 'identification' to describe identity.

> In common sense language, identification is constructed on the back of a recognition of some common origin or shared characteristics with another person or group, or with an ideal, and with the natural closure of solidarity and allegiance established on this foundation. In contrast with the 'naturalism' of this definition, the discursive approach sees identification as a construction, a process never completed - always in process (1996: 2).

Hall's (1996) study indicates three distinctive aspects of identity. First, identity is a person's self-image associated with different social categories and how people in these categories should behave (see also Akerlof & Kranton, 2000; Algan, Bisin & Verdier, 2012). Second,

identity is a process that obeys the logic of diversity and operates across difference. Third, there is no integral and unified identity (see also Grossberg, 1996). I concur that there is no unified identity and, hence, follow Storry and Childs (2002: 5) to use the plural term ‘identities' to indicate that no single identity would fit the diversity of people within nation-states. As discussed above, culture maintains a set of beliefs, values and assumptions that differentiate one group from another in the way they behave and understand others’ behaviours. Nonetheless, culture is also fluid and subject to change. Therefore, cultural identity often combines these two interrelated elements: culture and identity. Of course, necessary precautions should be made to avoid the misunderstanding of culture with other similar terms including identity.

Spencer-Oatey (2012) noted that there is a misconception of understanding culture synonymously with group identity. However, despite their interconnectedness, they also have differences. Baumeister (1986, 2015) identified two defining criteria of identity: continuity and differentiation. Continuity indicates being the same person across time. Things such as promises or commitment, that people require to keep through time, strengthen identity. They entail the continuity of things regardless of the time change. In contrast, differentiation involves being different from others. Some categories such as gender, religion and profession broadly differentiate people from one another, while categories like social security number classify them at an individual level. It could be argued that this might not work in the modern world where there is no guarantee for continuity. Nonetheless, the underlining point here is that identity is defined in relation to others and an effective or well-defined identity should meet one or both of these conditions (Baumeister, 1986).

Cultural identities refer to a person's sense of belonging to a particular culture or group (Hall, 1990). For instance, British cultural identities describe the way British people see themselves, especially in connection to the culture they generate, and its influence in their daily lives (Storry &Childs, 2002). This does not mean that the entire British people are homogenous and fit to a single mould. There are differences in some sorts of cultural identities because they are partly chosen by the people, and the rest imposed by one's background (Storry & Childs, 2002). In such cases, factors like religion, ethnicity and schooling affect the experiences of individuals. However, as indicated earlier, cultural identities are not fundamentally fixed. They are relational, incomplete and always in process, belonging to the past as well as the future (Grossberg, 1996; Hall, 1990, 1996). Hall stated:

> As well as the many points of similarity, there also critical points of deep and significant difference which constitute 'what we really are'; or rather –since history has intervened- what we have become. We cannot speak for very long, with any exactness, about 'one experience, one identity', without acknowledging its other side (1990: 229).

The above statement indicates that cultural identities are constantly in the process of change and transformation. In addition, it is significant to acknowledge the other side or subculture of people while speaking about the big culture. I argue that the dynamic and transformative nature of culture is imperative to the situation of immigrants who, in many cases, are new to the host culture. Immigrants need to develop positive intercultural experiences and emotional sensibilities to cope in the new cultural environment (Kim & Ruben, 1988). Such experiences would help them to understand and interact with the diverse cultural identities and consequently integrate to the host population. This leads to the idea that socio-cultural

integration involves the formation and transformation of identities (Algan, Bisin & Verdier, 2012).

Furthermore, Akerlof and Kranton (2000) highlighted two dimensions of identity: social categories and prescriptions. Identity as a person's sense of self is based on given social categories, and prescriptions associated with these categories. These dimensions suggest that identity is based on social categories such as gender identity as a man or woman, and individuals have various prescriptions attached to these categories. Akerlof and Kranton (2000) defined prescriptions as appropriate behaviour associated with a specific social category in different situations. As already noted, identity is defined in relation to others. It depends on how individuals meet specific behaviours or requirements expected from them in comparison to others (Algan, Bisin & Verdier, 2012).

When we look at Eritrean traditional culture, it has certain physical and behavioural characteristics that define the 'ideal man or woman'. Besides, there are specific roles associated with each gender group (Indira & Vijayalakshmi, 2015). As Epstein et al. (2001) argued, such categorisation starts at a younger age where girls are pushed out from certain activities dominated by men. Accordingly, Eritrean society expects women to fit in most of the categories and roles associated with the ideal woman. The same is true for men. However, the Eritrean prescriptions might not be all applicable in other countries because social behaviours associated with one cultural group are not entirely similar to others. Hence, migrants need to learn the host culture and understand the prescriptions attached to different social categories. In doing so, they can develop a new cultural identity to enhance the level of their social interaction and cultural integration (Akerlof & Kranton, 2000).

3.4 Cultural Imperialism versus Multiculturalism

Cultural imperialism and multiculturalism are two competing concepts significant for migration studies. Cultural imperialism is based on the principle that one cultural belief and practice is superior over another (Said, 1978, 2012; Su, 2011). It is broadly defined as the process and practice of promoting cultural domination and expansion of one country over another (Gudova, 2018; Said, 2012). This definition often operates at country level. It does not fully capture the cultural globalisation and domination of certain cultures in shaping modern societies. As indicated above, globalisation in general and cultural globalisation, in particular, has caused the flow of national and transnational cultures across the globe leading to cultural homogenisation. It is, therefore, critical to explore the role of national or regional cultures in the creation of global or modern cultural identities. In other words, it is important to understand the dominant cultural beliefs and practices which shape modern societies within and across societies.

Considering the above points, Mains (2009: 322) defined cultural imperialism as ‘a process of disproportionate influence over social practices and ideologies by one socio-political group over a politically weaker and (frequently) less-wealthy group’. Moreover, Sarmela's work relates cultural imperialism to previous events, current conditions and future trends.

> Cultural imperialism is the economic, technological and cultural hegemony of the industrialised nations, which determines the direction of both economic and social progress, defines cultural values, and standardised the civilisation and cultural environment throughout the world (Sarmela, 1975: 13).

Mains's and Sarmela's works connect cultural imperialism to colonialism, a time when many Western countries such as the UK, Spain and France overpowered and conquered most of the present-day developing countries. Cultural imperialism was one means of colonialism. Cultural identities and practices of the colonial powers were reinforced by undermining the indigenous ones (Mains, 2009; Ryan, 2008; Said, 1978, 2012). Even though most countries got their independence by the 1960s, colonialism has left a long-term impact on the social lives of the local people. The use of colonial languages and educational systems in many postcolonial states are two evident examples (Connell, 2007).

Furthermore, many argued that colonial domination has not come to an end, but changed its nature (Nkrumah, 1965; Ryan, 2008). It has taken a different approach which is commonly known as 'neo-colonialism'. With the absence of direct military and political control, powerful countries use political, economic and cultural pressures to control or influence other countries, especially their former colonies (Nkrumah, 1965; Ryan, 2008). Connell (2007) said that, after checking the curricula of universities in sub-Sahara African countries, many scholars found little indigenous (African) content, half a decade after their independence. In connection to this, Shizha (2006) explained that the endorsement of Western ideas and perceptions in the education system facilitates the dominance and supremacy of Western knowledge. Furthermore, music, fashion, movies, sports, religion and the media are other means that promote the creation and reproduction of Western cultural hegemony around the world (Dunch, 2002; Gudova, 2018; Said, 2012; Sparks, 2012; Su, 2011).

Cultural imperialism has a significant effect on the decline of many local cultures in the world. However, every culture or society has something to offer to the socio-economic and political development of the world (see Connell, 2007). It is a pity to see that many African

countries exclude their indigenous knowledge and focus only on Western modern knowledge. I believe that both Western and indigenous (African) knowledge could be used simultaneously. Connell (2007) argued that indigenous knowledge is significant for a cultural and intellectual resurgence of African countries. The accumulated wisdom and knowledge of the societies could also contribute to reviving the peace and development of the countries. African indigenous knowledge is often found in ritual poems, customary laws and other traditional materials. In her book *Southern Theory*, Connell (2007: 91) summarised the *Asuwada* principle of Akinsola Akiwowo[9] into the following four points.

- The unit of social life is the individual's life, being, existence, or character;
- The corporeal individual, essentially, cannot continue-in-being without a community;
- Since the social life of a group of individual beings is sustained by a group of solidarity, any form of self-alienation for the purpose of pursuing a purely selfish aim is, morally speaking, an error or sin;
- A genuine social being is one who works daily, and sacrifices willingly, in varying ways, his or her cherished freedom and material acquisitions for self-improvement as well as for the common good. For without one, the other cannot be achieved.

The *Asuwada* principle indicates the richness and role of African (societies) indigenous knowledge in living with peace and solidarity. It can also be a significant model for modern societies. The notion of *Ubuntu* (humanness) is another example that encourages people to treat others with fairness and kindness. These indigenous principles are more or less similar to what is currently known as global citizenship, the concept associated with individuals who

[9]Akiwowo (1980, 1986) used a Yoruba-language ritual poem from Oyo state in western Nigeria to derive ontological principles and sociological propositions.

engage actively in their community and with others to make the world a more equitable, peaceful and sustainable place (Oxfam, 2015; Stoner et al., 2014). Nonetheless, it is significant to examine the pros and cons of African customs and traditions since some of the traditional practices such as female genital mutilation and unjustifiable local healing practices are harmful. Indeed, it is important to question any information to avoid possible harmful consequences (Connell, 2014).

Overall, cultural imperialism has contributed to the re/production of colonial hegemony and populist interests. It is a manifestation of racism towards certain groups or nation-states (Said, 1978, 2012; Su, 2011). I concur with Mains (2009) that, like any hegemonic process, cultural imperialism is not a positive phenomenon. In addition to cultural domination, it influences the socio-economic and political conditions of less powerful (both economically and militarily) nations. Hence, many nation-states are in dilemma between resisting cultural imperialism and welcoming cultural globalisation (for example, see Su, 2012). Concerning migration, there is evidence that shows people's preference for migrating to their former colonial countries due to the familiarity with the culture and the language (see Collste, 2015; Czaika & de Haas, 2017). However, as shown above, there are no adequate studies that explain the lives of migrants within their host countries.

On the other side, the main feature of cultural imperialism is the cultivation or recognition of a single national identity. Thus, many countries used various means such as education to spread some entities of their national identity to different parts of the world. However, since the 1970s, multiculturalism has emerged as a new wave of cultural movement and trend in the USA and other Western countries to recognise cultural diversity and encourage the participation of ethnic minorities in the countries (Colombo, 2014, 2015; Mendible, 2000).

Multiculturalism refers to a situation where people can live alongside each other by appreciating or tolerating their cultural differences. Fairness, recognition and participation are significant in addressing issues of multiculturalism. Caleb Rosado has nicely defined multiculturalism as follows:

> Multiculturalism is a system of beliefs and behaviours that recognises and respects the presence of all diverse groups in an organisation or society, acknowledges and values their socio-cultural differences, and encourages and enables their continued contribution within an inclusive cultural context which empowers all within the organisation or society (1997: 2).

Like many other scholars (for example, Ashcroft & Bevir, 2018; Colombo, 2014; Grishaeva, 2012), Rosado (1997) perceived multiculturalism as a positive force that helps individuals and groups to equally participate in the socio-economic and political life while maintaining their culture. This definition, therefore, relates to different countries' immigration and integration policies. Migrants are encouraged to keep their original identity in a situation where the host countries recognise and respect diverse cultural groups, instead of focusing on a single national identity in which everyone is expected to embrace. For instance, since the 1980s, the UK has shifted from assimilation policy to multicultural approach (McLaughlin & Cummins, 2011). The assimilation policy pushes migrants to embrace the host society's culture by giving up their culture. In contrast, the multicultural approach recognises the diverse nature of migrants. It does not require them to give up their original culture in order to fit in the new social norms.

However, it is important to note that many governments and political parties have different policies. To be precise, many populist governments and the tabloid media label migrants as a threat to the homogeneity and national security of the host countries (Innes, 2015; Naumann et al, 2018; Parker, 2015). This perception masks the socio-economic and cultural contribution of migrants to their host countries (McLaughlin & Cummins, 2011). It also exposes them to discrimination, xenophobia and racism including institutional racism (Hayter, 2016; McLaughlin & Cummins, 2011; Riach & Rich, 1991; Wood et al., 2009). In addition, various terrorist attacks have caused politicians to doubt multiculturalism and focus on 'national unity' by building consensus around common Western values and principles (Eade & Ruspini, 2014). These developments raise important questions concerning the role of multiculturalism in challenging the dominant culture or class and ensuring the representation of the minority classes (see also Epstein, 1995). My study is, therefore, important to explore the impact of the two competing trends (cultural imperialism versus multiculturalism) in the migration and/or socio-cultural integration of migrants.

3.5 Socio-cultural Integration of Migrants

As already stated, many scholars noted that social and cultural diversity of societies is increasing throughout the world (Banks, 2004; Suárez-Orozco, 2001; Wang, 2007). These diversities also become greater and wider as people travel far from home, making life challenging for migrants. In such context, migrants need to integrate into the new culture to get essential services. However, I suggest that socio-cultural integration is a complex process.

Research shows that various alternative terms such as assimilation, adjustment, acculturation or incorporation have been used to refer to integration (Fokkema & de Haas, 2011; Kim, 2003; King & Christou, 2008; King & Skeldon, 2010). Although all these terms share the

idea of fitting in' into a host society and culture, they differ in many perspectives including in the way and degree of integration. For instance, referring to assimilation, Kim (2003: 244) stated:

> A variety of terms have been used to refer to what is essentially the same process as immigrants and sojourners go through in an unfamiliar culture. The term assimilation (or amalgamation) has often been employed to emphasise acceptance and internalisation of the host culture by the individual.

As explained above, assimilation requires migrants to completely adopt the host culture. However, it is important to consider cultural diversities and the importance of immigrants' native culture in the multicultural nature of the world. Hence, my study uses the concept of integration as it reflects 'normative models of a more multicultural or pluralistic society', rather than assimilation to a dominant culture society based on erosion of ethnic roots (Fokkema & de Haas, 2011: 6). Accordingly, socio-cultural integration is related to 'the ability to 'fit in', to acquire culturally appropriate skills and to negotiate interactive aspects of the host environment' (Ward & Kennedy, 1999: 660). Migrants should be able to interact and socialise with the host people and gain access to required services without being forced to conform to the host culture by abolishing their culture of origin (Magnusson, 2014).

Refugees and asylum seekers are among the most powerless and marginalized people in the world, including, perhaps especially, in economically developed Western countries (Langmead, 2016; Stewart, 2005). I use the host-guest metaphor to explain the immigration restriction and socio-economic exclusion that migrants and refugees, in particular, experience in their new country of residence. One of the most relevant definitions of 'host' given in

online dictionaries is someone who invites, receives or entertains people (as guests) to their homes. When used to denote an immigrant's country of residence, the term 'host' suggests that immigrants are 'guests', with limited rights and, perhaps, a presupposed aim of temporary stay (Baganha et al., 2006). In addition, the relationship between the host and guest society, particularly in relation to refugees, is mainly determined by the host country or population, putting the guests in a vulnerable situation (Bauman, 1996).

Host countries through different regulations often impose cumbersome requirements which in many cases prevent migrants, even those with valid status, from getting various services (Home Office, 1998, 1999, 2014; United Nations Population Fund & International Migration Policy Programme, 2004). This further affects the process of integration which, to some extent, is based on the receptivity of the host societies (Lee, 2018). Moreover, integration does not ensure that the migrants' culture of origin would be promoted or would always be intact or unchanged. Host country governments are not legally obliged to actively promote migrants' cultures and languages (Baganha et al., 2006). Despite these challenges, it is also important to note that the position of the 'guests' is not fixed. With inclusive immigration policy and socio-economic support, the position of the guests can be shifted to 'hosts' (Langmead, 2016). This includes a warm welcome and solidarity from the host society, instead of treating the refugees as uninvited guests or unwanted intruders (see Innes, 2015; Parker, 2015).

Many scholars (see Stewart, 2005; Wiese, 2010; Zimmermann, 1995) argue that socio-cultural integration is a challenging phenomenon, as migrants lose familiar support systems including family and community support systems (Smart & Smart, 1995). For example, immigrants need an induction to the host country, on topics such as on the rules and

regulations and access to essential services. Thus, it is not difficult to imagine that life could be more challenging when people have less support system, particularly in a new environment. This even makes more sense considering the situation of refugees that possess fewer resources and are often portrayed as 'unwanted invaders' (Parker, 2015: 15) or 'faceless threat' (Innes, 2015: 26) by the tabloid media. This indicates that socio-cultural integration needs effective and efficient support mechanism to resolve cultural conflicts and strengthen the overall interaction of immigrants in the host country (see also BeBe, 2012; Wang, 2011).

Furthermore, Wannamaker (2013) argued that social-cultural integration is an effort made to cope with the standards, values and needs of society, and adjust to the existing situation. This suggests that immigrants need to interact and socialise with the host people in order to learn the host culture and access required services (Ward & Kennedy, 1999). Nevertheless, as indicated above, this is not a simple task because various factors affect the process of socio-cultural integration of migrants. Some of them are immigration policies, structural issues and socio-emotional condition of the migrants. Immigration policies affect the life and integration of migrants in the host country (Gray, 2006). They are also highly connected to other factors, mainly structural factors. Employment and housing regulations are two examples which indicate the effect of immigration policies on social and cultural integration of migrants. In addition to financial reward, working is significant for people's health and wellbeing (Budd & Spencer, 2015). Besides, the linkage between organisational practices and national culture (Hofstede, 1991; 2011; Treven, Mulej & Lynn, 2008) suggests that working can serve as a means to understand the host culture. Here, the main points are the familiarity of the migrants to the organisational culture and their interaction with employees who are familiar to the host culture. They both enable them to learn and understand the new culture. Moreover, Fokkema

and de Haas (2011) found out that policies that allow immigrants to achieve upward socio-economic mobility positively influence their socio-cultural integration.

Additionally, structural issues especially employment and education rights are key factors affecting the experiences of migrants (Heckman, 2006). According to Heckman (2006), structural integration refers to the acquisition of rights and access to core institutions of the host society. He argued that participation in core institutions provides the opportunity to interact and establish relevant socio-cultural and economic capitals. Nonetheless, the provision of such services requires the will and commitment of the host countries. Unfortunately, migrants often experience socio-economic and structural inequalities such as unfair legal treatment and unequal access to social benefits upon arriving and settling in a host country (Torres & Wallace, 2013; Wood et al., 2009). Besides, the new environment exposes migrants to socio-emotional changes (De Leersnyder, Mesquita & Kim, 2011). These experiences then affect the mental and emotional conditions of the migrants including their personality and relationships with other people. In particular, research indicates that migrants have higher levels of emotional distress and they suffer from poorer mental health conditions than the host population (Maydell-Stevens, Masggoret & Ward, 2007; Zembylas, 2012). This, therefore, has a significant impact on their socio-cultural integration process.

Demographic factors also have a vital impact on social and cultural integration of migrants (Algan, Bisin & Verdier, 2012; Fokkema & de Haas, 2011). Such factors often relate to self-identity or personal values of migrants and influence their association with the host culture. According to Fokkema and de Haas (2011), gender and prior educational qualification significantly affect the integration of migrants to their host country. In the previous chapter, I discussed the connection between migration and education. I showed that educational

qualification helps migrants to fit in their host country by integrating to the labour market (Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007). In addition, it provides migrants with essential knowledge, skills and attitudes which could be used beyond their borders (Fokkema & de Haas, 2011). At the same time, I argue that these tools might not be enough to swiftly integrate to a new environment, but they could serve as a base for understanding the new culture (see Tsegay, 2016a). I further note that gender, as a social category, is significant for social-cultural integration (Akerlof & Kranton, 2000). Overall, women are more vulnerable during their migration journey and within their destination country (Kawar, 2004; Palumbo & Sciurba, 2018; Ratha, Mohapatra & Scheja, 2011). With the domination of patriarchal culture in contemporary societies, they often experience different types of mistreatment including sexual harassment and domestic violence (Bhattacharyya, 2018; Zarkov& Davis, 2018). Many also shoulder job and family responsibilities, negatively affecting their career and other socio-economic advancements (Alakeson, 2012; Shah & Shah, 2016).

Moreover, Algan, Bisin and Verdier (2012) identified that factors such as place of birth, age upon arrival, and length of residence in the host country influence the production of specific cultural integration patterns. The place of origin is associated with various elements of migrants such as language, religion, recognition of educational qualification, and attitude of the host population. These elements in many ways affect migrants' life in their destination countries. For instance, as discussed in Chapter Two, many European countries do not equally recognise the educational credentials and job experiences held by African migrants and the host people or other immigrant counterparts from developed countries. The African migrants' credentials are often viewed as inferior; and, hence, they are devalued (Wilson-Forsberg, 2015; Garrido & Codó, 2014). In addition, the migrants' capacity of lingua-franca languages especially English is considered insignificant in the job market (Garrido & Codó,

2014). Furthermore, Aslund, Bohlmark and Nordstrom Skans (2009) explained that children who arrived at lower age could easily integrate to the host society because they usually get high exposure to the host culture in schools and other places. In contrast, those who arrive at a higher age are more likely to mingle with immigrants of similar ethnic origin.

To conclude, socio-cultural integration is a complex and gradual process. It is affected by different factors such as immigration and structural factors. However, these factors are not equally applicable to tourists and vagabonds. Therefore, it is important to analyse the impact of these factors with regard to the nature of the immigrants. The following section discusses two approaches to socio-cultural integration of migrants.

3.6 Socio-cultural Integration Approaches

This study is broadly informed by theories of globalisation, migration, and education. So far, I have used different theoretical concepts to explain the causes of migration and the general perception of people towards migrants. In this section, I briefly discuss the process of socio-cultural integration of migrants using two theoretical approaches: cross-cultural adaptation approach and transition theory. Considering the epistemological position of this study (i.e. interpretive phenomenology), the following theoretical approaches are used to understand the existing knowledge and inform my findings later in the thesis (Lopez & Willis, 2004).

3.6.1 Cross-cultural Adaptation Approach

Cross-cultural adaptation approach can be used to explore the process of socio-cultural integration based on three broad factors: communication, environment and predisposition (Kim, 1988, 2001). Kim (2001: 31) defined cross-cultural adaptation as:

> The entirety of the dynamic process by which individuals, upon relocating to new, unfamiliar or changed socio-cultural environment, strive to establish (or re-establish) and maintain a relatively stable, reciprocal, and functional relationship with the environment in order to achieve an overall 'fit' between the individual and the environment to maximise the individual's social life chances.

Kim's approach places adaptation at the intersection of the environment and the individual. She argued that cross-cultural adaptation is an advancing, interactive and cyclical process that involves the immigrants and the settled population as well as the communication of acculturation (of the new culture) and deculturation (of the old culture) (Kim, 2001, 2015; see also Harvey, 2007). This suggests that socio-cultural integration involves intertwined processes of acculturation, the learning of new ideas, values and practices; and deculturation, the questioning, reframing and changing of ideas and practices from the past. The continuous interplay between acculturation and deculturation leads to the formation of a new identity. However, it is important to note that this process does not completely replace the old culture with a new one; it rather creates an identity which allows migrants to cope with the new environment without completely eroding their culture of origin (Kim, 2001; Shafaei & Razak, 2016). Kim summarised this as follows:

> Adapting to a new and unfamiliar culture, then, is more than survival. It is a life-changing journey. It is a process of "becoming"—personal reinvention, transformation, growth, reaching out beyond the boundaries of our own existence. The process does not require that we abandon our former personalities and the cultures into which we were born (2001: 9).

The above quotation indicates that cross-cultural adaptation requires migrants to understand their culture as much as they try to do other cultures. It is a process which transforms cultural identity into a form that combines both the old and new cultures side by side and allows people to be more open and tolerant to cultural differences (Shafaei & Razak, 2016). Hence, it could be said that cross-cultural adaptation is a compromise between the old and new cultures.

Kim (2001) put forward this approach to understand the process of intercultural adaptation on the basis of three broad factors: communication, environment and predisposition. According to Kim (2001), immigrants face culture shock when they move to a new environment and culture. This confusion causes social and psychological problems which, in many cases, lead to stress. Hence, immigrants go through a stress-adaptation process to fit in the new cultural environment. Therefore, one way to mediate the process of adaptation is to interact with the established population through interpersonal and other means of communication (Lee, 2018; Shafaei & Razak, 2016). Intercultural communication through face-to-face contacts and electronic messages offer significant experiences to acquire cultural habits and facilitate intercultural transformation of individuals that goes beyond one's home culture (De Paola & Brunello, 2016; Kim, 2001, 2003, 2015).

Moreover, Lee (2018) argued that migrants are more likely to adapt well to an environment which has receptive host societies. In such cases, migrants find it easy to interact with the host society. In contrast, environments with hostile host societies would lead migrants to isolate themselves and confine their communication to people of similar conditions. In other words, it affects the cultural learning and adaptation of the immigrants. These points indicate that environmental factors such as the host society receptivity affect the process of cultural

adaptation of migrants. Additionally, Kim's approach includes factors related to individuals' 'predispositions' such as their preparedness for change, ethnic proximity, and adaptive personality (2003: 252). These conditions influence the cross-cultural communication and adaption of migrants (Kim, 2001, 2003; Lee, 2018).

3.6.2 Transition Theory

In addition to cross-cultural adaptation approach, this study adopts Schlossberg's transition theory to understand the socio-cultural experiences of immigrants based on the type, context, and impact of their integration (Schlossberg, 1981, 2011). According to Schlossberg, Waiters and Goodman (1995: 33), a transition is 'any event or non-event that results in changed relationships, routines, assumptions, and roles'. Schlossberg (2011) argued that, through time, everyone experiences non-events, anticipated or unanticipated transitions which change their lives for better or worse. Many researchers have used Schlossberg's transition theory to explain the change that goes within immigrants to reach a stage of adjustment, acceptance and successful coping (for example, Amundson et al., 2011; Smart & Smart, 1995; Zhang, 2016). In this study, I use Schlossberg's transition theory to explain the integration of immigrants to the exotic and new social and cultural values of the host country. Therefore, this study focuses on two significant aspects of the transition theory: understanding and coping with transitions.

Schlossberg (2011) stated that understanding the various forms of transitions is the first step in dealing with change. According, she identified three different types of transitions:

- Anticipated transitions
- Unanticipated transitions

- Non-event transitions

Anticipated transitions are life events that are usually predicted to happen. These are major events, such as starting a new job and wedding time, which most people expect them to occur. Unanticipated transitions are events that occur unexpectedly. Whereas non-event transitions are expected events that do not occur at all. Many migrants come with the expectation that they will find a good job to support their family back in their origin countries. However, sometimes these expectations do not happen due to disruptive unexpected events such as series illness/accident or other factors. Moreover, the situation might not be as many migrants anticipate: to swiftly start a new life. Therefore, it is significant for immigrants to understand that their integration experiences might be upsetting as much as they could be fascinating. This helps them to make psychological and other necessary preparations to cope with any negative transitions.

Schlossberg identified four major factors (which are also called the 4S system) that influence individuals' successful coping with transitions: situation, self, support and strategies. It is important to closely look at these factors to understand the transition model put forward by Schlossberg (1981, 2011). First, situation refers to the person's condition at the time of the transition. Concerning this, Schlossberg (1981) described that most transitions can be explained using seven variables: role change, affect, source, timing, onset, duration, and degree of stress. For instance, despite the common nature of pre-migration stress among refugees, the level of stress varies depending on the role change they experience in their host country: role gain or role loss (Schlossberg, 1981, 2011). The stress is more likely to decrease, if they are granted an automatic asylum. Nonetheless, it could increase in cases of asylum rejection or other role loss. Second, the self refers to personal characteristics and

inner strengths that help people to cope with a transition. Schlossberg (1981) described eight significant individual characteristics that influence people's adaptation to transitions: psychosocial competence, gender and gender roles, age and stage of life, health condition, ethnicity, socio-economic status, values and beliefs, and previous experience with similar transition. As discussed earlier, these factors affect the socio-cultural integration of people to their host countries.

Third, the support system provided to immigrants has a significant effect on their successful coping with transitions. The interpersonal and institutional support that individuals get during a transition does not only facilitate their successful integration, but it also promotes their physical and psychological wellbeing (Schlossberg, 1981, 2011; Schlossberg, Waters & Goodman, 1995). Migrants in general and refugees, in particular, need socio-cultural, economic and emotional support from various institutions and individuals, including their family and friends. Research shows that the support that immigrants get from families, friends, and professional associations is significant in their endeavour to fit in the host country (Newland & Patrick, 2004; Van Meeteren & Pereira, 2013). Finally, the strategies are coping responses used to change or reframe the situation and reduce stress. Schlossberg (1981) further stated that there is no single effective strategy that can be used to help every individual to cope. This suggests that individuals need to find appropriate strategies that go with the environment and other relevant circumstances.

3.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have shown that globalisation, culture and integration are multifaceted concepts. They represent multiple events and, in some cases, culture and integration are misunderstood for other terms. For instance, culture is interchangeably used with nation

(Spencer-Oatey, 2012), while assimilation is used to refer to integration (Fokkema & de Haas, 2011; King & Christou, 2008; King & Skeldon, 2010). In addition, I navigated into the globalisation debates and explored their connections with migration and socio-cultural integration of migrants. Through Bauman's (1996, 2012) theory of 'Liquid Modernity', I outlined the distinctive feature of refugees from other types of migrants such as economic migrants. Refugees have no option, but to flee their original place for their safety.

Furthermore, I discussed cultural globalisation including cultural imperialism and multiculturalism. In particular, I analysed the concepts of culture and cultural identity to understand the process of socio-cultural integration. I used Hofstede's (1980, 2001) cultural dimensions model to argue the presence of cultural differences between nations. Moreover, I explained that culture is fluid and always in a process (Grossberg, 1996; Hall, 1990, 1996). This allows people to acquire multiple, developing identities and, thus, helps with the integration of migrants in their host countries without abolishing their culture of origin (Kim, 2003). However, it must be noted that there are various factors which facilitate or hinder the successful integration of migrants. Environmental, demographic, structural and immigration-related factors shape the social and cultural experiences of migrants in their host countries (Fokkema & de Haas, 2011; Heckman, 2006).

Finally, I summarised the process of socio-cultural integration processes using two approaches. I borrowed Kim's cross-cultural adaptation approach (1988, 2001) to demonstrate the interplay between acculturation and deculturation, and the role of the host population. Additionally, using Schlossberg's transition theory (1981, 2011), I indicated that there are many anticipated or unanticipated challenges beyond the refugee's control. Hence, successful coping with transitions depends on the nature of the situation, the individual's

condition, the support system obtained, and strategies used. In brief, my assessment of the empirical literature reveals that my study is not the first research regarding the nexus between migration and education, or integration of migrants in their host countries. Nevertheless, as briefly indicated in chapter one, there are various reasons for this study.

Despite the availability of many studies in international migration, my literature review indicates that little emphasis has been given to socio-cultural integration of migrants (refugees in particular) in their host countries. In this line, many researchers have suggested for further studies to better understand the issue (Diehl et al., 2016; Fokkema & de Haas, 2011; Heckman, 2006; Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007). In addition to the points raised above, the following examples are provided to show some of the literature gaps which will be addressed in my study.

> Another study is required to provide an explanation for the diverging effects of higher education on socio-cultural integration among different immigrant groups. Further research is needed to verify whether these differences can be explained by the different extent to which immigrant groups are able to capitalise on their education degrees by obtaining higher-level jobs, which is also likely to facilitate socio-cultural integration (Fokkema & de Haas, 2011: 36).

> While structural and economic trajectories are more aligned with classical assimilation theory, the patterning of cultural and social integration is harder to explain, and the two do not necessarily run in parallel. Hence, it remains necessary to further develop empirically based theoretical accounts of integration processes that can continue to illuminate these findings (Diehl et al., 2016: 172).

Diehl et al. (2016) further indicated that there is a lack of research regarding differential selection of migrants. This is an important issue because socio-cultural integration is influenced by personal, demographic, structural and other factors (Boccagni & Baldassar, 2015; De Leersnyder, Mesquita & Kim, 2011). As indicated above, factors such as the migrants' country of origin and educational qualifications affect the socio-cultural integration of migrants. To add to this, there is very little research regarding socio-cultural integration of Eritrean migrants. Therefore, in this study, I address socio-cultural integration of migrants by considering various factors such as country of origin, educational qualification, causes of migration and the host country.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

> Whether we are aware of it or not, we always bring certain beliefs and philosophical assumptions to our research. Sometimes these are deeply ingrained views about the types of problems that we need to study, what research questions to ask, or how we go about gathering data (Creswell, 2003: 15).

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the methodology and the methods used and highlight their importance for conducting this study. Silverman (2013: 122) stated that 'methodology is a general approach to studying research topics'. He further argued that no method of research is intrinsically superior to any other. Researchers need to choose a particular methodology (qualitative or quantitative) based on what they try to find out. The quality and success of any study depend on the systematic matching between the methods of data collection and analysis, and the research question/s (Creswell, 2013). Therefore, while selecting my methodology and methods, the first question I asked was whether they are fit to answer my research questions and address the issue that I have raised. Second, as indicated in Chapter One, my methodology is expected to make a substantial contribution in enabling my thesis relevant to other contexts.

I start the chapter with the philosophical approaches underpinning this study and, then, turn to the methods and procedures used to conduct the study. My research is qualitative and based on a phenomenological approach, aiming to study the phenomena from the perspective of those who experience it (Wiersma & Jurs, 2004). In this chapter, I show that the

philosophical positions and research methods are carefully selected to reinforce the execution of the research project. The following section discusses the epistemological and ontological assumptions of the study.

4.2 Epistemological and Ontological Considerations

Research philosophy is 'a belief about the way in which data about a phenomenon should be gathered, analysed and used' (Moksha, 2013: 36). There are different philosophical viewpoints about the world. These beliefs, assumptions and worldviews affect people's understanding of reality and the way it is researched. They are related to epistemological and ontological positions of researching a social phenomenon (Moksha, 2013). Epistemology is concerned with what constitutes acceptable knowledge in a discipline, whereas ontology deals with the nature of reality (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). My epistemological and ontological approaches are aligned with my positionality and the focus of my study. As a social science researcher, I aim for the interpretation and understanding of the social world. My study focuses on the socio-cultural integration of migrants including the construction and reconstruction of identities. In view of the above points, this study is based on interpretivist (constructionist) paradigm which holds that 'reality is constructed in the mind of the individual, rather than it being an externally singular entity' (Ponterotto, 2005: 129). The two philosophical approaches and their application in this study are discussed in detail below.

4.2.1 Relativist Ontology

My study explores the socio-cultural integration experiences of migrants. As indicated in Chapter Three, this study views culture and identity as socially constructed entities (Akerlof & Kranton, 2000; Grossberg, 1996; Hall, 1990, 1996; Howard, 2000). Hence, I applied a relativist ontological approach which maintains the presence of socially constructed multiple

realities and, thus, recognises the significance of dynamic interaction between researcher and participants to capture and describe the participants' experiences (Hathcoat, Meixner& Nicholas, 2018; Silverman, 2013).

Relativism, as a constructionist ontological position, asserts that 'social phenomena and their meaning are continually being accomplished by social actors' (Bryman, 2008: 17). Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) argued that social interaction does not only affect the creation of social phenomena; it also shapes and reshapes the process of creating shared meanings and realities. This can be seen along with two important points. First, people's social interactions are influenced by their beliefs, values, perceptions and other elements. These elements also affect the way people interpret their own experiences. Second, social, cultural and technological factors bring social change to societies by changing the environment they live in (Boccagni & Baldassar, 2015; De Leersnyder, Mesquita & Kim, 2011). This indicates that societies change in order to adapt to the constantly changing world. According to these views, the perceptions and understanding that people hold are expected to change simultaneously (Bryman, 2008). To cut this short, people's identities are not static (Bauman, 2011).

Furthermore, a relativist approach 'upholds the possibility of multiple, coexisting meanings' determined by human social activity (Hathcoat, Meixner& Nicholas, 2018: 103). This statement consists of multiple layers. It shows that there is culturally, socially, historically and politically bounded reality. In this context, Creswell (2003) stated that socio-cultural and historical settings are often connected to the specific contexts where the participants live and work. This suggests that research informed by constructionism needs to focus on the context to understand culturally or historically bounded realities. It also recognises the importance of

context for knowledge and knowing. In such cases, constructionism helps to better understand how people create and view their world (Charmaz, 2008).

The case of migrants and refugees is a good example to explain the role of social interaction in the creation of realities. Migrants and the host population often have cultural differences which affect the way they view and perceive various social and cultural issues. As a result, migrants are required to learn the host countries' culture to access required services. In other words, migrants need to interact with the host society to create shared meanings and realities and fit in the host countries (Howard, 2000; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). In this context, a constructionist approach helps 'to understand the complex nature of people in their social-cultural context and to describe the meaning they associate with their experiences and actions' (Bear-Lehman, 2002: 85). Furthermore, Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) pointed out that the constructionist approach has one major advantage compared with other approaches: it listens to the opinions and narratives of different social actors.

However, Scotland (2012) argued that the constructionist approach may compromise the participants' privacy and autonomy. The participants might withhold necessary information due to fear of exposure. Hence, the constructionist researcher needs to build a good rapport with the participants to collect adequate and relevant data (Kvale, 2006; Silverman, 2013). A well-established rapport enables the participants to explain their experiences and perceptions without hesitation (Lather, 1992). In other words, with good rapport, the researcher can collect quality information to better comprehend the participants' reality. As indicated below, one way to do this is to assure the participants that their identity will be kept confidential.

4.2.2 Subjectivist Epistemology

This study falls under the epistemological position of subjectivism. This epistemological branch rejects the positivist attitude that reality is objective -- exists independently of humans (Moksha, 2013; Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). Positivists suggest that reality should be described based on scientific evidence. In contrast, interpretivists 'reject the notion that a single, verifiable reality exists independent of our senses' (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016: 55), and believe that reality can be fully understood through subjective interpretation (Moksha, 2013; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009).

My research philosophy is aligned with my positionality and the focus of my study. As a social science researcher, I assert that meaning is constructed through social interaction of individuals (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). Hence, I adopt the subjectivist approach which advocates that meaning is not objective (Chowdhury, 2014; Kivunja& Kuyini, 2017). Moreover, in this study, I explore the socio-cultural experiences of highly educated Eritrean migrants in the UK. I aim for the subjective interpretation and understanding of the social world, which is often associated with qualitative research (Creswell, 2013).

4.3 Qualitative Research Approach

As indicated above, it is important to understand the connection between philosophical positions (ontology or epistemology) and methodological decisions in research. The philosophical position of researchers usually shapes and, in some cases, is informed by the methodological approaches they use in conducting a study (Hathcoat & Meixner, 2017; Hathcoat, Meixner& Nicholas, 2018). This study employed constructionism, an ontological approach which is often associated with qualitative methodology (Bear-Lehman, 2002; Hathcoat, Meixner& Nicholas, 2018). Similarly, interpretive phenomenology views

knowledge as subjective, leading to qualitative research procedure (Giorgi, 1997; Thanh & Thanh, 2015).

Qualitative research seeks to explore and understand how individuals interpret their social environment (Astalin, 2013; Bryman, 2008; Creswell, 2003, 2013). Considering the purpose of this study, qualitative research design with a phenomenological approach helps to examine and understand the circumstances of the participants in relation to their context (McNabb, 2008). Here, the phenomenological approach has two particular contributions. It helps in identifying the experiences of the participants and understanding the common features they share (Hammond, Howarth & Keat, 1991). Moreover, it is used to develop a composite description and discussion of the participants' experiences and the situation under investigation (Creswell, 2013).

Overall, qualitative research has an unrivalled capacity to constitute compelling arguments about 'how things work' in particular contexts and, at the same time, is capable of producing very well-founded 'cross-contextual generalities' (Mason, 2002: 1). The approach is useful to explore the experiences of migrants through the stories they tell (Wiersma & Jurs, 2004).

4.3.1 Interpretive Phenomenological Design

Since my study used an interpretive phenomenological approach to understand the participants' experiences within their social context (Creswell, 2003), I now describe the main features and types of phenomenology to better understand interpretive phenomenology and its application in this study. Broadly, the focus of phenomenology is to describe 'what all participants have in common as they experience a phenomenon' (Creswell, 2013: 76). There are two major types of phenomenological approaches: descriptive and interpretive

(hermeneutic) phenomenology (Chan, Fung & Chien, 2013; Lopez & Willis, 2004; Reiners, 2012). Mathematician and philosopher Edmund Husserl first established phenomenology in the early 1900s as descriptive psychology (Reiners, 2012; Spencer, Pryce & Walsh, 2014). It was later used as a research approach in social science and other disciplines. Descriptive phenomenology, developed by Edmund Husserl, describes people's conscious experiences while suspending preconceived opinions (Lopez & Willis, 2004; Reiners, 2012). Husserl believed that, through bracketing, phenomenological research could identify commonalities from the participants' experiences (Lopez & Willis, 2004). This is summarised in the following definition:

> Phenomenology is a philosophy that is concerned with the question of how individuals make sense of the world around them and how in particular the philosopher should bracket out preconceptions in his or her grasp of that world (Bryman, 2008: 13).

This definition includes two important points. The first one, which is targeted at the research participants, indicates that phenomenology describes and interprets the lived experiences of individuals from their point of view (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011; Creswell, 2013; Wiersma & Jurs, 2004). Similarly, as explained by Hammond, Howarth and Keat, phenomenology involves 'the description of things as one experiences them, or of one's experiences of things' (1991: 2). Second, using a phenomenological approach requires researchers to bracket out or mitigate the effects of any unacknowledged preconception connected to the research (Chan, Fung & Chien, 2013; Tufford & Newman, 2012). Tufford and Newman (2012) identified two benefits of bracketing. It enhances the rigour of the research. In addition, considering the close connection of the researcher with the

research project, bracketing protects the researcher from any emotionally challenging effects of the research.

Nevertheless, Martin Heidegger, one of Husserl's students, developed interpretive phenomenology to challenge the focus on phenomenological inquiry, the method of bracketing and the use of a theoretical approach. Heidegger argued that the central focus of phenomenological inquiry should be on the experiences of individuals within their social context, rather than their conscious knowledge (Conroy, 2003; Horrigan-Kelly, Millar & Dowling, 2016; Lopez & Willis, 2004; Reiners, 2012). This view indicates that human beings' existence is inseparable from the world they live in because it greatly influences their realities (Conroy, 2003; Horrigan-Kelly, Millar & Dowling, 2016).

Other significant differences between descriptive and interpretive phenomenological approaches are concerning the method of bracketing and the usage of a theoretical framework. Interpretive phenomenology assumes that presuppositions or any other background knowledge cannot be erased from the mind (Hycner, 1985). Moreover, it emphasises that a researcher's presuppositions, experiences or knowledge are significant to the study (Horrigan-Kelly, Millar & Dowling, 2016; Lopez & Willis, 2004; Reiners, 2012). As indicated in Chapter One, such prior knowledge or experiences are often the main reason for considering the research topic. They are also helpful in the research process such as data collection and analysis (Tufford & Newman, 2012). Researchers, therefore, do not need to try to erase their prior knowledge. Instead, they should acknowledge it at some point in the study. In line with this, Lopez and Willis (2004) noted that using interpretive approach requires researchers to explicitly explain any preconceptions and state how they are being

used in the study. This helps the researchers to be aware of their preconceptions and conduct the research 'from within the attitude of the reduction' (Giorgi, 1997: 244).

Furthermore, unlike descriptive phenomenology, interpretive phenomenology allows for the use of theoretical or conceptual framework as a component of inquiry. Lopez and Willis explained this as follows:

> In a hermeneutic study, a theoretical approach can be used to focus the inquiry where research is needed and is used to make decisions about sample, subjects, and research questions to be addressed. Use of an orienting framework by the researcher is also a way of making explicit study assumptions and the researcher's frame of reference. If a framework is used, the study should provide evidence that it does not have a biasing effect on the narratives of the participants. The framework, however, will be used to interpret the findings (2004: 730).

This shows that interpretive phenomenology uses relevant and related theoretical orientations or conceptual frameworks to understand existing knowledge, determine the research problem, and explain the findings. Lopez and Willis (2004) reiterated that, in interpretive phenomenology, the role of theory is not to generate hypotheses for testing. Hence, the researcher needs to explain 'how the framework was used in the interpretation of the data and in generating findings' to indicate that the theoretical fretwork has no biasing effect on the study (Lopez & Willis, 2004: 730).

Considering its subjective nature (Thanh & Thanh, 2015), interpretive phenomenology is criticised for its lack of generalisation. However, as indicated above, phenomenological (both

descriptive and interpretive) research is concerned with identifying commonalities from the experiences of the participants. With bracketing or sustained in-depth reflection, researchers can generate common themes which could be useful to people from other contexts (Creswell, 2013; Hycner, 1985; Lopez & Willis, 2004). To elaborate this, Hycner wrote:

> In the process of even investigating the experience of one unique individual we can learn much about the phenomenology of human being in general. Even within experimental research there is a long and respectable history of studies done with a sample of one. Therefore, even with a limited number of participants, though the results in a strict sense may not be generalisable, they can be phenomenologically informative about human being in general (1985: 295).

I am raising this issue in connection to the concern for generalisation discussed in Chapter One. Being aware of the limitation of qualitative research with regard to generalisation, a phenomenological approach could allow my study to be informative to the experiences of other refugees. This reflects the argument that the lessons learned from my participants might be useful to others (Carminati, 2018; Lodico, Spaulding & Voegtle, 2010). Overall, interpretive phenomenological approach is used in this study for the following four reasons. First, considering the focus of interpretivism in describing and interpreting the lived experiences of participants, the approach helps to understand the socio-cultural integration experiences of highly educated migrants in the UK. Second, along with Martin Heidegger, I acknowledge the role of prior knowledge and experiences to the study. Third, my study is informed by theories of globalisation, migration and education which are used to understand the study and analyse my findings. Finally, as shown above, the fact that interpretive

phenomenology deals with identifying commonalities among participants' experiences is significant to people from other contexts.

4.4 Recruitment of Participants

Research involves the selection of participants to address the research question. It includes specifying the sample, choosing the participants, and deciding an appropriate sample size (Creswell, 2012). These procedures depend on the research question raised and the method used to conduct the study (Wilson, 2016). Before addressing the recruitment procedures, it is helpful to provide some information about the geographical location and community characteristics of Eritrean migrants in the UK. As indicated above, there are more than 40,000 Eritrean refugees and British Eritreans in the UK (see Cockcroft, 2008; Home Office, 2019; UNHCR, 2018). The Office for National Statistics (2018) reported that about 31,000 of these residents are overseas-born and about 12,000 of them hold British citizenship. Even though more Eritrean men enter the UK and other countries as asylum seekers (Home Office, 2018a; Lijnders, 2018), this study showed that the number of women in the UK is boosted through family reunion, marriage or other similar means. This, among others, has equalised the gender distribution among the Eritrean refugees and British Eritreans in the UK (see Office for National Statistics, 2018).

Furthermore, the majority of the Eritrean refugees and British Eritreans in the UK live in England, particularly in London (more than a quarter of them), and large cities in North West England, West Midlands, and Yorkshire and the Humber (Cockcroft, 2008; Office for National Statistics, 2013). Up to 2011, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland had fewer than 1000 Eritrean refugees and British Eritrean residents in total (Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, 2011; National Records of Scotland, 2013; Office for National Statistics,

2013). More recent reports highlight a growth in number since 2011 (for example, see Murphy & Vieten, 2017).

In general, most of the Eritrean communities in the UK celebrate both the traditional Eritrean (Ge'ez) and Western holidays; conduct traditional ceremonies (such as wedding and baptism ceremonies); and attend Eritrean community churches. In addition, there are many Eritrean networks in the UK; but the migrants' political division as 'supporters' or 'critics' of the Eritrean government and other differences have weakened the performance of the networks and the organisation of the Eritrean community as a whole (Hirt & Saleh Mohammad, 2018). Below, I discuss three aspects of participants' recruitment: the sample type (who), the sample size (how many) and the sampling method (how).

4.4.1 Sample

A sample is part of a target population selected to conduct a study within a limited time and effort (Sarantakos, 2013). The participants selected for a particular study are expected to provide significant information and perspectives concerning the case being studied (Wilson, 2016). Hence, the participants must be carefully chosen to represent the target population. This qualitative study focuses on the socio-cultural experiences of highly educated Eritrean migrants in the UK. Understanding this issue requires data from participants with at least three features. First, the participants must be Eritreans in origin. Second, they must have migrated to and live in the UK. Finally, they must have completed their university education in Eritrea, before migrating to the UK. Below, I address these points one by one.

The first point raises the question of deciding whether someone is an Eritrean in origin or not. Here, all I am saying is that, at some point, the participants were living in Eritrea holding an

Eritrean nationality. Some of them might have since acquired British citizenship. People with refugee status can apply for UK citizenship after living for at least six years in the country (Murray, 2016). However, this is not to mean that they stop identifying as migrants or Eritreans. This connects to the second point which deals with who is a migrant. As discussed in Chapter Two, the term covers a wide range of people (Bauman, 1996; Kempf, 2006; Koser, 2016; Wiese, 2010). Furthermore, Koser (2016) argued that some issues such as the time when a person stops being a migrant are still undecided.

In this study, I focused on selecting any highly educated Eritrean migrant in the UK, who arrived in the country within the past two decades. Moreover, those immigrants who lived in the UK for at least two years were considered. I strongly believe that migrants can have considerable experience within two years of their stay in their host country. Finally, as shown in Chapter One, obtaining a university degree from Eritrea makes my participants highly educated individuals. The educational qualification obtained before migration also confirms that they had been living in Eritrea for some time.

4.4.2 Sampling Methods

Sampling is 'the selection of specific data sources from which data are collected to address the research objectives' (Gentles et al., 2015: 1775). I used purposive and snowball sampling methods to select potential participants for the study. Two-thirds of the participants were selected using purposive sampling--a non-probability sampling technique which focuses on certain characteristics of a population that are of interest to the researcher to answer the research questions (Silverman, 2013). Purposive sampling helps in identifying potential participants that represent a broader group of cases for the study (Teddlie & Yu, 2007).

Access to these participants was gained through the Asmara University Alumni Association (AUA)[10], an association of highly educated Eritrean migrants in the UK of which I am also a member. The association organises different events including the annual meeting of all members where they conduct different activities and elect a central committee that runs it for a year. The events are good platforms to meet Eritrean migrants who completed their university degree in Eritrea, before migrating to the UK. I used events and channels of the network to connect to, select and recruit potential participants. I approached potential participants on a one-to-one basis and placed phone calls, emails, or sent messages to provide them with additional information about my study. The Facebook group of the association (which has more than 90 members) was particularly helpful to target participants because it often provides information on educational specialism, place of residence, gender, marital status and, in some cases, length of residence in a particular place. It is important to understand that some of these demographic fields might not be explicit or correct. However, their Facebook profiles, posts and pictures provide basic information. Overall, purposive sampling is based on a thorough understanding of the population under study and the objectives of the study (Wilson-Forsberg, 2015).

Furthermore, I applied snowball sampling to recruit the rest of my participants. It is a type of purposive sampling which allows for the generation of cumulative samples from the existing participants (Wilson-Forsberg, 2015). Accordingly, I was able to get additional samples based on the recommendations of the participants acquired through purposive sampling. I used snowball sampling to find more and diverse participants, especially those who arrived in the UK recently. In fact, the provision of names by other participants helped to build a good

[10] AUA was formally established in 2016 to promote network among Eritrean graduates and empower them to support each other and contribute to Eritrean Community in the UK and beyond.

rapport and enabled me to collect sufficient and relevant data. In other words, this method of sampling was more effective as the participants were less concerned about my identity. As a result, I was not required to explain much about myself, including in terms of my political views. This concurs with Atkinson and Flint's (2001: 2) statement that snowball sampling is significant for 'obtaining respondents where they are few in number or where some degree of trust is required to initiate contact'.

To conclude, purposive and snowball sampling methods were used to select appropriate participants for the study. The participants were mainly identified based on their Eritrean origin, having migrated to the UK and holding a bachelor's degree from Eritrea. In addition, other features such as gender, marital status and years of residence in the UK were considered, with a view to ensure the maximum diversity in relation to these criteria.

4.4.3 Sample Size

According to UNHCR (2018), there are about 13,000 Eritrean refugees in the UK. It is difficult to explore the condition of each migrant due to time, resources and other limitations. Hence, I focused on a certain sample or number of participants with significant features for my study (Silverman, 2013). The total sample size of respondents for this study was 24, determined based on my research approach, budget and time as discussed below.

It is argued that results in qualitative research cannot be generalised (O'reilly & Parker, 2013). Qualitative research often uses small samples to acquire significant information for a deep understanding of the case under study (Gentles et al., 2015). However, the issue of determining a sufficient sample size has been a point of discussion among qualitative researchers (for example, Boddy, 2016; Dworkin, 2012; Marshall et al., 2013; Mason, 2010;

Morse, 2000; O'reilly & Parker, 2013). Even though many concur on the idea of saturation as an indication for achieving sufficient data collection (Gentles et al., 2015; Mason, 2010), there is no consensus on the number of the sample size required to reach saturation (Marshall et al., 2013). Fusch and Ness (2015: 1409) noted that there is 'no one-size-fits-all method' to reach data saturation because 'when and how' one reaches saturation varies from one study design to another.

Saturation is reaching a point where additional data collection provides little or no new information to the study (Gentles et al., 2015; Mason, 2010). It is affected by various factors such as the nature and scope of the study, sampling procedures, number and quality of interviews, available resources, and the researcher's experience (Malterud, Siersma & Guassora, 2016; Marshall et al., 2013; Mason, 2010). Therefore, different sample sizes are suggested for different research designs and disciplines. Talking about management and medical research, Boddy (2016) stated that a meaningful case study can be conducted with only one participant while 12participants could lead to data saturation. Moreover, Mason (2010) and Sim et al. (2018) indicated that a sample size of fewer than ten participants could provide adequate data for phenomenological studies.

As indicated above, this is a qualitative study based on interpretive phenomenology. In addition, my study is informed by narrative interviews from participants selected through purposive and snowball sampling. In most cases, phenomenological research requires a limited number of interviewees 'given the vast amount of data that emerges from even one interview' (Hycner, 1985: 295). Furthermore, I had limited time and budget to complete my study. Thus, 24 participants including nine women were interviewed to collect data for the study.

Table 4.1 Participants' profiles

No.	Name of Participant (Pseudonym)	Sex	Age	Marital Status	Years of residence in the UK at the time of interview
1.	Semhar	F	30-35	M	5-7
2.	Senait	F	30-35	M	5-7
3.	Fanus	F	30-35	M	5-7
4.	Weini	F	36-40	M	5-7
5.	Marry	F	30-35	S	5-7
6.	Yohana	F	30-35	S	5-7
7.	Helen	F	30-35	M	8-10
8.	Simret	F	30-35	M	8-10
9.	Yodit	F	30-35	S	8-10
10.	Haben	M	36-40	M	2-4
11.	Habtay	M	36-40	M	2-4
12.	Hans	M	30-35	S	2-4
13.	Ermias	M	30-35	M	5-7
14.	Michael	M	36-40	M	5-7
15.	Issack	M	36-40	S	5-7
16.	Meron	M	46-50	M	8-10
17.	Neguse	M	41-45	M	8-10
18.	Wolday	M	41-45	M	8-10
19.	Kibrom	M	36-40	M	8-10
20.	Solomon	M	36-40	M	8-10
21.	Simon	M	41-45	M	8-10
22.	Mehari	M	45-50	M	8-10
23.	Berhane	M	36-40	M	8-10
24.	Amir	M	36-40	S	8-10

4.5 Data Collection Method

Choosing a relevant research method is significant for conducting a successful study and obtaining accurate results (Silverman, 2013). The data collection method for this study was carefully selected to answer the research questions appropriately. I used narrative interviews to listen to the voices and stories of the participants in their own words and elicit rich and detailed data to understand the case under study (Creswell, 2013; Sarantakos, 2013). Below, I have discussed narrative interview and its significance for this study. Then, I turn to the interview process used in this study.

4.5.1 Narrative Interview

Mason (2002) stated that qualitative interviewing operates along with a constructionist approach. It tries to understand the participants' points of view to explore their experiences and lived world (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). Different interview methods are employed for different purposes. In this study, I used narrative interview in order to allow the participants to express their experiences in their own way and from their own perspectives (Marhsall & Rossman, 2006). Narrative interview is a method that enables participants to tell stories about important events in their lives and social context (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000; Marhsall & Rossman, 2006; Muylaert et al., 2014). This is significant for phenomenological approach because researchers are expected to collect data from potential participants in order to develop a composite description of the essence of the participants' experience including 'what' they experienced and 'how' they experienced it (Creswell, 2013: 76). Narratives are also 'inherently linked to identity' (Kartch, 2018: 2). They help people to create a sense of belonging and make meaning from their points of view. Hence, narrative interview is used to understand the experiences and realities of the participants.

Moreover, narrative interviews allow interviewees full freedom to express their views, opinions and ideas (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000; Sarantakos, 2013). However, the stories might not come up spontaneously throughout the interview (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). Hence, during the interview, the interviewer, when necessary, is required to elicit for information.

> After the initial request for a story, the main role of a narrative interviewer is to remain a listener, abstaining from interruptions, occasionally posing questions for clarification, and assisting the interviewee in continuing to tell his or her story (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015: 180).

Through questions, nods, and silences, the interviewer can collect adequate and relevant narratives (data), and structure the different happenings recounted into coherent stories. Kartch (2018) further argued that the participants' narration or storytelling does not come without the interviewer's invitation. This, therefore, requires knowledge about the resourcefulness of the participants and a means to invite the participants to tell their stories.

Another significant point is the setting or direction of the interview and narration. Narrative interviews use unstructured interview techniques which are aimed to elicit people's social realities (Bryman, 2008; Creswell, 2013; Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000; Zhang & Wildemuth, 2017). Nevertheless, this does not mean that the interview or narration is set randomly or without a direction (Creswell, 2013; Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000). Jovchelovitch and Bauer (2000) argued that it would be naive to claim that the narration of events is without structure. They stated that narration follows universal rules that guide the process of story production. The underlying argument of Jovchelovitch and Bauer (2000) is to show that narration follows

a self-generating schema with three main features: detailed texture, relevance fixation and closing of the gestalt.

Table 4.2 Main characteristics of storytelling

Characteristic of storytelling	**Description**
Detailed texture	This refers to the provision of detailed information to make a plausible transition from one event to another.
Relevance fixation	According to his or her perspective on the world, the narrator tells relevant and selective features of the event.
Closing of the gestalt	A three-fold (a beginning, a middle and an end) narration of events to make the story flow and finally end.

(Adapted from Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000).

Creswell (2013) suggested that narrative interview needs to be guided by the research questions to elicit the intended information. In doing so, the researchers can draw up a list of 'exmanent' questions -- those questions which reflect the research questions and the researchers' interest and formulations (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000). Jovchelovitch and Bauer (2000) noted that such an approach can also help to distinguish immanent themes, which are topics and accounts that appear during the narration by the informant. It is important to transform the exmanent questions into immanent ones by anchoring them in the narration using the participant's language (Muylaert et al., 2014). At the same time, attention should be given to immanent issues and preparing for further questions because new themes

and topics which are not covered in the exmanent questions might emerge (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000).

To conclude, through narrative interviews, I asked open-ended questions to encourage the participants to describe their experiences as they understand them (Marhsall & Rossman, 2006; Sarantakos, 2013). The interview aimed to obtain information from the participants regarding 1) the causes and routes of migration from Eritrea to the UK, 2) their socio-cultural integration experiences in the UK, and 3) the role of their prior educational qualifications to integrate into the new culture or society. The following section discusses the narrative interview process used for the data collection.

4.5.2 The Interview Process

Narrative interview often reflects the participants' thinking, cultural patterns and factors that influence or determine their lives (Sarantakos, 2013). Based on the above-stated features and principles of narrative interview, different mechanisms were used to solicit adequate and relevant information. In this section, I discuss the interview process including the interview protocol and pilot interviews used in the study.

In addition to the introductory part, the process of narrative interview consists of three main stages: the narration, questioning and explanation (Fehér, 2011; Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000; Sarantakos, 2013). These stages guide researchers in conducting a narrative interview. As shown in the following table, the purpose of the first stage is to lay the ground for the main interview; whereas stages two and three describe the process of narration and narrative inquiry, respectively.

Table 4.3 Stages of narrative interview and the expected activities within

Stages	Activities
1. Introduction	• Formulating the interview situation and its ethical standards • Introducing the topic, its outlines and dimensions • Arranging interview recording equipment • Introducing an initial topic for narration
2. Narration	• The interviewee describes personal and social experiences • The interviewer listens carefully and encourages the interviewee to continue storytelling and compare them with other experiences
3. Questioning	• The interviewer can ask for immanent questions to fill any emerging gaps or clarify any ambiguous statement • The process becomes part of the narrative as the participant continues to offer his or her idea
4. Explanation	• The interviewer can ask more direct questions such as 'why' questions • Return to stage two if new points which require further narration emerge • Stop recording and continue the conversation as it comes

(Adapted from Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000; Sarantakos, 2013).

The last session of the narrative process indicates that a narrative interviewer can ask semi-structured questions to supplement any missing non-narrative material (Fehér, 2011). This could be demographic or other information that the participants did not cover in their narration. I used the above stages to prepare an interview protocol and structure the interview in a way that could elicit adequate information to address the research questions. According to Creswell (2012), an interview protocol is a form designed to guide researchers in the interview process. It helps to structure the information to be provided and questions to be

asked to the interviewee. I prepared an interview protocol containing basic information about the study and exmanent questions to encourage and stimulate the interviewees to tell their stories (see Appendix 1). Moreover, a pilot study, a small-scale methodological test (Kim, 2010), was conducted to guarantee the significance of the data collection process.

A pilot study is important to ensure that the proposed interview procedure would work in collecting the required information to adequately capture the subject being investigated (Kvale, 2007; Turner III, 2010). I interviewed two participants using the above stages and transcribed the data to test the participants' selection and interview methods including the interview protocol and questions. After providing a brief description of the purpose and ethical principles of the study, I explained the outline and dimension of the study to the participants (see Appendix 2). Then, I asked my initial question, 'can you tell me about how you came to be a migrant in the UK', and gave the interviewees full freedom to tell their story. This was supplemented by follow-up questions and semi-structured interviews. Finally, I did a personal reflection of the interview to assess the effect of my positionality on the interview process and outcome (Berger, 2015). My reflection consisted of two points: 1) the role of my beliefs, knowledge, experiences, political stances and other positions in affecting the information that the participants shared; and 2) my emotional response to the stories that the participants narrated. The two points are mainly concerned with the role that I played in soliciting more information and, at the same time, shaping the nature of the interview. In particular, I was trying to be careful not to impose my ideas and determine the outcome of the interview.

Overall, the result of the pilot study was very encouraging. As expected, the interviews captured the areas that I hoped to cover. The plan that the interview can be conducted in

English was confirmed. As I discussed in Chapter One, English is the sole medium of instruction in Eritrea from junior secondary school onwards. Yet, I was not quite sure whether the participants would be comfortable to be interviewed in English and could clearly explain their ideas in the language. Moreover, as anticipated, the interview setting including the place and instrument were all good, and each interview took about 30 minutes. However, I found two things which sought further attention. First, a new point concerning the effect of gender and family relations on the lives of the migrants emerged. Second, the participants seemed uncomfortable to record their personal information. One of the participants asked me to write his/her age and marital status on a sheet of paper. Therefore, I improved the interview procedure according to the pilot study. In particular, I added a few questions to capture the newly emerged points and decided to write the personal information of the participants in a sheet of paper at the beginning of the interview. Moreover, I used age ranges for documenting the age of the participants.

Based on the lessons learned from the pilot interviews, I conducted the main interviews in London and other UK cities. I asked my participants to suggest a place to conduct the interview, for their convenience. However, health and safety issues, convenience and accessibility of the spaces to conduct the interview as well as the level of interruption and adequate sound recording of the conversation were considered in choosing the interview settings. The interviews were conducted in coffee shops, restaurants or in the interviewees' office. As I did in the pilot interviews, I explained the purpose of the study and any potential risks to the participants. In addition, I told the participants that their responses would be kept confidential to protect their rights, privacy and safety, and explained that they could withdraw at any time without giving a reason during the research process. The interviews were audio-

recorded with the permission of the interviewees. Most interviews took about 30 minutes, whereas few extended to an hour.

Generally, the participants' attitude toward the research was positive. They were supportive in providing me with adequate and relevant information for the study. Some even gave me the name and basic information of one or more potential participants. In fact, most of the participants were happy to see that a fellow Eritrean was trying to capture and disseminate their experiences. This was connected to their argument that many of the studies about Eritrea/ns were conducted by foreign scholars who lack adequate knowledge of the country's socio-economic and political context.

4.6 Thematic Data Analysis

Sound data analysis is one of the key requirements for a rigorous and credible qualitative research. However, there is no single best method of data analysis that could fit every study because different methods of data analysis have their strengths and weaknesses (Creswell, 2013). This does not mean that nothing can be done to ensure the selection of an appropriate method of data analysis. I used thematic data analysis method for this study, and the following two points were considered in choosing this particular method of data analysis. As indicated above, a thoughtfully matching of data collection and data analysis techniques to the research questions is fundamental to the quality and success of any study (Creswell, 2013). In addition, qualitative research is characterised by the production of a large quantity of data from which significant features can be selected (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011).

I applied thematic analysis to the data collected through the interview process. This approach is used across many fields and disciplines. Lapadat defined thematic analysis as:

> A systematic approach to the analysis of qualitative data that involves identifying themes or patterns of cultural meaning; coding and classifying data, usually textual, according to themes; and interpreting the resulting thematic structures by seeking commonalities, relationships, overarching patterns, theoretical constructs, or explanatory principles (2010: 926).

This definition captures the various purposes of thematic analysis that are sought in this study. Thematic analysis allows to systematically categorise and analyse the data from the stories of the migrants in order to seek commonalities, relationship and any other patterns that address the research questions (Sparker, 2005). It identifies and describes patterns of experience and the overarching design that unites them (Ayres, 2012). Moreover, thematic analysis provides flexibility by summarising key features of a large corpus of data and, at the same time, offering a rich and detailed interpretation of the data by explaining the events as well as the context (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Furthermore, thematic analysis is a method which focuses on constructing a set of categories to interpret the data (Sarantakos, 2013). The themes or set of categories are identified and developed by a means of the analytical strategy called coding (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2016). According to Lapadat (2010: 926), 'Coding is a process of closely inspecting text to look for recurrent themes, topics, or relationships, and marking similar passages with a code or label to categorise them for later retrieval and theory-building'. Many scholars agree that there are two major ways of conducting coding in a thematic analysis: inductive or deductive approach (Hawkins, 2018; Lapadat, 2010; Schwandt, 2011). The deductive approach uses an existing theory, theoretical framework, or typology to identify themes (Hawkins, 2018). It requires the

development of a priori and content-specific scheme from the topic under investigation and the theoretical foundation that drives the study (Schwandt, 2011). Then, themes that fit the existing theoretical foundation or research hypothesis are searched and identified. Lapadat (2010) further argued that researchers might use their research and interview questions as a priori themes for coding the data and identification of themes. In contrast, the inductive approach uses the data under investigation to build themes (Hawkins, 2018; Lapadat, 2010; Schwandt, 2011).

In this study, I used a hybrid of inductive and deductive approaches to code the transcripts from the narrative interviews manually and categorise the migrants' perspectives into different themes. In fact, along with Schwandt (2011), I argue that the inductive approach is not free of any preconceived idea because it may begin with a posteriori or context-sensitive simple typology. Nevertheless, the inductive approach requires investigating any reoccurring themes relevant to the goal of the project within the data (Hawkins, 2018). The researcher is expected to 'work back and forth between the data segments and the codes or categories to refine the meaning of categories' (Schwandt, 2011: 2). This suggests that, despite the possibility for the use of a posteriori typology, the themes in inductive approach do not only emerge from the data, but they are also primarily connected to it. According to Lapadat (2010: 927), 'Inductive thematic analysis avoids rigidity and premature closure, which are risks of a deductive approach'. Moreover, I have used the deductive approach to summarise my findings in relation to my research questions. This helped me to directly answer my research questions and examine my data with an existing theory. Overall, the use of a hybrid approach provides rigour in thematic analysis (Creswell, 2013; Lapadat, 2010).

The application of thematic analysis needs a careful and focused re-reading and review of the data. I followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phases of conducting thematic analysis. Many other scholars have also analysed these phases, hence, contributing to people's understanding of thematic analysis (see Maguire & Delahunt, 2017; Nowell et al., 2017)

Table 4.4 Phases of thematic analysis

Phase	Description of the process
1. Familiarise with the data	Transcribing, and reading and re-reading the data
2. Generate initial codes	Coding interesting features of the data
3. Search for themes	Organising codes into potential or preliminary themes
4. Review themes	Reviewing, modifying and developing the preliminary themes
5. Define and name themes	Identifying the essence and specifics of each theme
6. Write-up	Producing a report by selecting compelling extract examples to address the research questions

(Adapted from Braun & Clarke, 2006; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017; Nowell et al., 2017).

As can be seen, after transcribing the interviews, I read the transcripts several times to familiarise myself with the data and to generate the codes. Then, I reorganised the codes into themes and analysed the data with a reference to the research questions and literature. The theoretical frameworks were used to interpret and theorise the data (Lopez & Willis, 2004).

4.7 The Researcher's Identity and Positionality

This phenomenological study focuses on the socio-cultural integration of highly educated Eritrean migrants in the UK for various reasons. As indicated in Chapter One, some of these

reasons relate to my identity and positionality. Researcher's positionality includes affiliation, race, gender, immigration status, personal experiences, linguistic tradition, beliefs, biases and political stances (Berger, 2015). Researchers indicate that the 'insider-outsider' perspective affects the researcher's knowledge of the context of the study and relationship with the research participants (Creswell, 2003). These issues of power and privilege (knowledge) affect the process of data collection (Milligan, 2016). Moreover, Gregory et al. (2009) and Creswell (2003) stated that the researcher's socio-cultural and political positions affect the research process including access to data, data analysis and outlets for research dissemination.

In this study, I position myself as an 'insider-outsider' researcher who shares similar identity, characteristics and certain experiential base with the participants (Luttrell, 2010). My positionality as an Eritrean who studied in Eritrea and is currently living in the UK gave me an advantage as someone who can relate to the experiences of the migrants and to whose experiences they can relate. I believe that my familiarity with the socio-economic and political conditions of Eritrea and the UK affected my data collection process. As discussed above, it was vital in finding potential participants for the study and building a good rapport with them. It also helped me to avoid naive questions and better understand the participants' experiences, perceptions and imaginations

While acknowledging the benefits of 'insiderness', it is also important to cultivate the 'outsider' position to avoid making any assumptions in the research design and data collection (Milligan, 2016). It is vital to focus on listening to the stories and thoughts of the participants in order to collect a participant-driven data and conduct a rigorous study. Many scholars suggest that this could be achieved through reflexivity or critical self-evaluation of

the researcher's positionality (Berger, 2015; Creswell, 2013; Milligan, 2016). The main point here is the recognition that researchers' position may affect their research process and outcome (Berger, 2015). It is then that they start to address the research ethics and rigour by focusing on participant-driven data, instead of relying on their assumptions (Milligan, 2016). Accordingly, as discussed above, I conducted in-depth and continual reflection assessing the impact of my positionality on the data collection and analysis. Overall, I believe that explicit recognition of my positioning and preconceptions has allowed me to monitor the insider-outsider tensions and conduct a rigorous study.

4.8 Ethical Considerations

Qualitative researchers face different ethical issues that surface during data collection, data analysis and dissemination of findings (Creswell, 2013). These issues often relate to informed consent, confidentiality and protecting the safety of the participants. The hostile political environment in Eritrea also requires the application of rigorous ethical principles. It is evident that researchers in conflict or post-conflict regions face various challenges and dilemmas (Campbell, 2010). I argue that the situation is similar in nation-states which fail to protect fundamental rights of citizens, including human rights. It makes researchers afraid that part of them that trusts in justice and holds hope could perish for the sake of protecting their lives and the participants (Bernard et al., 2010). Therefore, I had to take necessary precautions to document the voices of the participants without jeopardizing their lives. I considered all these points while working towards gaining ethical approval.

The study followed the ethical principles of the University of Roehampton and the British Sociological Association (BSA) at all stages of the research. Accordingly, I safeguarded the proper interests of the participants involved in the research through different mechanisms.

The issues of information, comprehension and voluntariness of the participants were addressed through informed consent (see Appendix 2). The purpose of the study and its potential risks were explained to the participants, and their responses were kept confidential to protect their rights, privacy and safety. In addition, I used pseudonyms throughout the research to preserve anonymity and protect the identity of the participants (Silverman, 2013). The names of the participants were changed even at the time of data transcription and all the materials including the consent forms and recordings were kept in a safe and locked box in a secure place.

4.9 Conclusion

In conclusion, as this research focuses on socio-cultural integration experiences of migrants, the research design and methods used were selected to provide a better understanding of the migrants' voices and the context. A qualitative research design with a phenomenological approach was used to explore the contextual conditions and understand the circumstances of the participants in a broader sense. Phenomenology enabled me not only to identify the experiences of the participants, but also to focus on their common features. Hence, using a phenomenological approach, I was able to develop a composite description and discussion of the participants' experiences. Furthermore, I used narrative interview and thematic analysis because they are particularly appropriate for understanding the stories people tell about their life trajectories (Sarantakos, 2013).

CHAPTER FIVE

DREAMING OF A BETTER LIFE: THE EARLY EXPERIENCES

> Refugee voices are given lip service, but rarely taken seriously. Feeling unheard or unable to express one's voice is pervasive in the struggles of marginalised people. To not have a voice is to lose control of the script and the language that reshapes the world, defines us and establishes which of us do (and do not) count. It is for the same reason that the iconic poster of ACT UP and other gay rights activists in the United States in the 1980s does not reference access to welfare, law or any other set of rights. It simply reads, "Silence = Death" (Jones, 2019: 2).

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the first part of the empirical findings of the study. In this chapter, I focus on the early experiences of the migrants mainly upon their arrival and during their asylum seeking/waiting time. I also consider the effect of educational qualifications and migration journeys in the integration process. I indicate that highly educated Eritreans migrate to the UK due to inhospitable circumstances in their home country. They hope to receive asylum and start their lives anew within a very short time. However, they come across circumstances that do not meet their expectations. Delays in the decision on their asylum applications, the cultural differences they find between Eritrea and the UK, and the loneliness they face in their host country make them vulnerable. This leads to anxiety and psychological distress.

The chapter begins by describing the background of the Eritrean migrants who participated in my research project. I discuss the causes that led them to migrate and the routes they took to

arrive in the UK. Drawing on the work of Bauman (1996), I assert that most of the Eritrean migrants are 'vagabonds' who flee from war, human rights abuses and economic hardship. Besides, they take long, costly and dangerous routes to arrive in the UK. Then, I analyse the highly educated Eritrean migrants' hopes and vulnerabilities. I show that instead of finding the welcoming home they hoped for, they meet a hostile environment which is confusing and distressing.

5.2 Migration: Causes and Routes

As discussed in Chapter One, Eritrea has been one of the major source countries for asylum seekers (Home Office, 2015; UNHCR, 2008, 2009, 2013a, 2015, 2018). Many of those migrants came to the UK to escape the lengthy national service, human rights abuses and the political situation of the country. Furthermore, most of the Eritrean migrants I interviewed reach the UK after crossing three to five countries. The following sections discuss the migration causes and routes in detail.

5.2.1 Causes of Migration

Boswell and Geddes (2011) stated that around 3 percent of the world's population are international migrants. The remaining 97 percent are immobile due to, among others, 'social and psychological costs of migrating to another country' (Boswell & Geddes, 2011: 2). In addition, many countries place tight immigration policies to control illegal and unskilled migration. Nevertheless, such policies have not curbed the flow of migrants to different countries. A considerable number of Eritreans risk their lives to enter economically advanced Western countries for various reasons. As noted above, I reveal that the participants of this study are what Bauman (1996) calls 'vagabonds', who experienced war, persecution and economic hardships in their home country. They were forced to leave their country due to

unfavourable political, economic and human rights situation. I now turn to explore these dimensions one by one.

Hostile Political Environment: The Ethio-Eritrean border war (1998-2000) and the two decades (2000-2018), during which there was 'no war, no peace', eroded the rule of law in Eritrea. In 2001, the Eritrean government imprisoned high government officials and journalists, and froze the constitution that had been ratified in 1997 (Patterson, 2016; Reid, 2009). The interviews I conducted show that the political situation of Eritrea, especially the absence of the rule of law, caused many citizens to migrate to different parts of the world including the UK, leaving their job and family behind.

Wolday, for instance, arrived in the UK in 2008. After completing his studies at the University of Asmara in 2000, he was assigned to one of the ministries of the country and served in different positions for many years. However, after eight years of public service, Wolday left his position and came to the UK to seek asylum. He pointed out:

> I worked for the Eritrean government for eight years. As part of my job and position, I had the opportunity to travel abroad. However, continuing in that role representing the Eritrean government was against my conscience. I was not convinced with the way the country had been governed. Due to the political system, I could not officially criticise the government or even ask for official resignation. However, there were different ways by which I was expressing my opposition, which also put my life in danger. Then, I decided to leave my post and come to the UK to seek asylum.

Wolday's narrative foregrounds four vital pieces of information showing the causes that pushed him to migrate and seek asylum in the UK. First, he had a very good job with a high-level position, which enabled him to travel to different countries and, to some extent, acquire socio-cultural and economic capital. Second, his testimony indicates that he is critical of the political persecution and other human rights violations committed in the country. However, third, he was not able to criticise the government of Eritrea without fear. Therefore, finally, he felt compelled to migrate to the UK, leaving his work and family. As can be seen, Wolday is complaining about the political system and the absence of freedom of expression in Eritrea. Similarly, Issack emphasised that he did not want to leave Eritrea. Nevertheless, he was unhappy with the political situation of the country. Issack commented, 'I migrated to the UK because of the [Eritrean] government's hostile policy to the youth at home'. He asserted that the government should create a political and economic system which recognises the youth, who should be able to participate and benefit from it. This suggests that the exodus of Eritreans could continue unless the government initiates political and economic reforms. Many participants shared this thought and that is what has been happening after the 2018 peace agreement with Ethiopia. Instead of decreasing the migration level, 'the peace rapprochement led to a huge surge in Eritrean refugees into Ethiopia' (Tronvoll, 2019: 17).

Mehari is another participant who left Eritrea for political reasons. He is an Eritrean migrant who sought asylum in the UK soon after finishing his study in another European country. After he graduated from the University of Asmara, Mehari was recruited in the same institution as a teaching assistant and then a lecturer. Later, the university sent him to Europe for further studies. However, by the time he finished his studies, the political situation of Eritrea was not the same. The higher education of the country had been put under military administration while the government had become very hostile to any political criticism (see

Müller, 2008). Hence, the hostile political situation caused Mehari to leave Eritrea and seek asylum in the UK. He said:

> I did not have any plan to leave Eritrea. I always had a plan to build my career in the country. As a result, I went back to Eritrea for a month to check the situation. It was not going in the right direction. Then, I consulted with friends and families and decided to leave the country.

The testimonies of Wolday, Mehari and Issack articulate how the political condition of Eritrea changed the life of many citizens, including those who had been outside of the country for work, study or other purposes. They became, in Bauman's (1996) term, 'vagabonds'. The transformation was risky and unanticipated for many. They would probably lose the career and social status they had built. They did not know when they would be reunited with their family and return to their country. However, many argued that they had no other choice. They were tired of the government's totalitarian rule and its intervention in every aspect of their lives. As discussed earlier, the first decade of the 21st century was marked by new political developments in Eritrea, exacerbating the push factors for migration. This suggests that factors such as poverty, war, and political and religious persecution leave people with limited choice, but to flee their country (Martin & Zürcher, 2008; Parkins, 2010). Similarly, the imprisonment of university students, government officials and journalists, together with other gross violations of human rights in 2001 instilled fear and insecurity in many citizens including highly educated Eritreans (Müller, 2008). They were not able to live their lives and do their jobs without fear. This has continued unchanged for years. Thus, many participants explained that they considered migration to be an indispensable solution

for the pursuit of a better life. They wanted a life free from persecution and political uncertainty.

The majority of my participants stated that intervention and unwarranted supervision from the government were common in all sectors including academia. For instance, Mehari said that the absence of academic freedom was one of the main reasons that forced him and many other university lecturers to leave their country. Moreover, Issack noted that highly educated citizens, like anyone else, require an exit visa to travel abroad for conferences and other educational programmes, which are often denied unless they are initiated by the government. As Müller (2008) indicated, HEIs and their staff experience political intervention in administrative affairs, receiving visas to study abroad or participate in conferences, and in researching areas which affect government policies. Additionally, the government's intolerance of freedom of speech and its restriction of movement negatively affected the academic activities and development of the HEIs staff. Such actions further deepened the discontent of the highly educated Eritreans and forced them to migrate.

Furthermore, Habtay substantiated Issack's and Mehari's argument. Habtay was a lecturer at one of the HEIs in Eritrea, before migrating to the UK. He told me that he left Eritrea due to the lack of a favourable political and economic situation in the country.

> It is more about my ambitions and future plans in life which include the pursuit for higher education and changing my life. I did not see that opportunity in Eritrea, which was politically unstable. I was not able to realise political, economic and social opportunities in the country. The teaching environment was also intimidating. When I was teaching, I did not feel safe and I find it very difficult to compromise between

> theory and practice. I did not have the freedom to teach and do my [research] activity freely. It is very difficult to exercise academic freedom, especially in social science. (Habtay)

These testimonies highlight that many highly educated Eritreans feel uncomfortable working with a government that does not uphold the rule of law. For some, it was motivated by feelings of remorse (Averintsev, 2004) and a desire to avoid blame (Weaver, 1986) for the human rights violations done by the government. They were unhappy and insecure because of the freezing of the constitution and the violation of human rights such as the imprisonment of citizens without due process (Reid, 2009). For others, it was a 'political critique' of leaders' infinite demands of unjustified services from their citizens (Riggan, 2013: 756). They believe that the government of Eritrea used the Ethio-Eritrean border war and the aftermath especially the 'no war no peace' situation to prolong the national service and erode the rule of law. For instance, Wolday, Meron and Mehari claimed that the government has been using the Ethio-Eritrean conflict as a scapegoat for its socio-economic and political failures. This is not to imply that the Ethio-Eritrean conflict and the aftermath did not cause socio-economic damage or a security threat to the country (see Bereketeab, 2019). The main argument here is that the government does not have to dismantle the democratic transformation and oppress its people which could further threaten the peace and security of the country. Consequently, they left their privileged positions and migrated to the UK experiencing status loss, which is one of the dimensions of resettlement stress (Lindencrona, Ekblad & Hauff, 2008). These participants expressed their concern about the possibility of regaining their (privileged) positions in the UK. They shared the view that they might not be able to get a social status similar to the one they had in Eritrea.

This study maintains the notion that the Ethio-Eritrean border war and its aftermath hindered the democratic process in Eritrea (Reid, 2009; Riggan, 2016). The government of Eritrea started to respond to any opposition and demands regarding the implementation of the constitution with hostility, causing many Eritreans, including highly educated ones, to fear for their lives, question the country's political developments, and leave to seek asylum in various parts of the world, including the UK.

Human Rights Abuses: As indicated above, the political situation of Eritrea negatively affected the people's lives through the consequent erosion of the rule of law, violation of human rights, persecution and imprisonment of individuals without due process. For example, Haben said that he left Eritrea to flee religious persecution. After graduating from the University of Asmara in the mid-2000s, Haben was assigned to serve in the Eritrean Defence Forces. Haben noted that, despite the very low stipendiary received in return for his work within the national service, he was happy to live in Eritrea with his family and friends. However, he left the country in 2012 for safety issues.

> It was not safe for me anymore. A friend of mine was arrested for his religious belief the year before I left the country. There is no freedom of belief and religion in Eritrea. If you belong to certain denominations, you are not allowed to practice your religious beliefs. This was the problem with me and many of my friends. Many of my friends went to prison for their faith. Eventually, it was a matter of time before I could be arrested. In that case, I had to leave the country. So, I left the country with some other friends by crossing the border to Sudan illegally. From Sudan, I went to another European country for educational purpose. Then, I moved to the UK without finishing my study to seek asylum. (Haben)

Haben's testimony highlights the religious crackdown in Eritrea. According to the USDS (2017: 3), the Eritrean population is 'approximately 48-50 percent Christian and 48-50 percent Muslim', with most Christians affiliated to the Orthodox Church and Muslims to Sunni Islam. There are also significant minorities of Catholic and Protestant Christians. The law and unimplemented constitution allow citizens to follow and practice any religion. However, the Eritrean government restricted any religious activity except for Orthodox Christian, Roman Catholic, Lutheran Protestant and Sunni Islam. Any religious activities besides those four were seen as a 'threat to national security', with members facing prosecution. Therefore, some Pentecostal and Muslim religious groups as well as Jehovah's Witnesses have been targeted and detained without due process. The Ministry of Information published an editorial accusing these religious groups of presenting a threat to national security:

> The value-system of the Eritrean people remains intact in these times in which mercenaries hired by intelligence agencies or deluded elements are resorting to similar ploys to foment chaos and advance their selfish interests. Their varied and deceitful approaches that include: "we have a new bible" … "We wish to preach to you the Words of God", "We can purify you", "We can give you a ticket to Heaven"…" Mahdi will be coming soon; so we have to prepare the ground etc." continue to be seen and rejected, as ever, as alien and subversive agendas. Indeed, any activity that aims to foment turmoil and terrorism, through overt or covert subversion in the name of religion – whether in its Christian or Islamic variant; fundamentalist or "moderate" façade, is not tolerated by the Eritrean people as it constitutes a serious matter of national security (Eritrea Profile, 2017: 2).

This statement highlights the intolerance of the government to certain religious groups. My study shows that this forced many highly educated Eritreans, belonging to those religious groups, to leave the country. As Pentecostal Christians, Haben and Meron raised two points which challenge the above editorial and any other similar discourses. First, there is no valid reason and single event in Eritrea justifying the claim of involvement of Eritrean Pentecostal Christians in terrorism or related activities. Second, the government's action does not adhere to the rule of law. Instead of appearing in court, those who are accused of a different religious view have been arrested without due process and often exposed to torture. The underlining point here is that Haben and Meron do not understand why they are being asked to renounce their religion. They claim that they do their national duties including the mandatory national service and do not coerce anyone to follow their beliefs. Hepner (2014) argued that religious persecution in Eritrea is associated to fear of foreign intervention and the government's desire to develop a secular nationalist regime in the country. This, however, violates citizen's freedom of religion and belief and, consequently, forces them to migrate.

Furthermore, many other participants told me similar stories. The specific reasons for leaving the country might differ, but they all agree that they migrated because their safety was jeopardised and not guaranteed by the law. Meron opined that he failed to return to Eritrea after he travelled to the UK for a conference since his workmates were imprisoned without due process.

> I left Eritrea for a conference and did not return because some members of my organisation were imprisoned for unknown reasons. Some of them were closely

> connected to my office. Therefore, I decided to remain in the UK to avoid similar incident.

Meron commented that he was forced to seek asylum in the UK, leaving his work and family behind. In fact, he considered himself lucky to be out of the country at such a critical time. It could be due to such situations that the United Nations investigation on human rights concluded, 'It is not law that rules Eritreans, but fear' (UN, 2015: 8).

Long National Service: My study shows that prolonged national service is one of the main reasons for the migration of highly educated Eritreans. The participants in my research stated that the duration of national service negatively affected their professional and economic development. Hence, they saw migration as a means to pursue their dream of a better life.

The testimonies from my participants show that they were victims of the prolonged national service with very limited control in their lives. As noted in Chapter Two, national service in Eritrea for the last two decades has been conducted in a manner inconsistent with international law (Home Office, 2018a; Kibreab, 2009, 2013). After the start of the Ethio-Eritrean war in 1998, the duration of the national service extended indefinitely. This forced many of those on national service to remain in the army for more than two decades. Those who were assigned to serve in the civil service were also forced to give up their dreams and work in their assigned places with salaries that did not cover their basic needs. As shown below, Neguse's quotation offers concrete evidence.

> When I finished my education, I was assigned as a teacher in a secondary school and served for two years. However, I was not satisfied with the work that I was doing.

> First, it was not related to my educational background. Like most other graduates, I was not appointed [by the government] based on my profession, but to fill the gap created by the lack of teachers in the schools. We were obliged to serve wherever the government assigns us. It was a duty that we were required to fulfil as part of our national service. Second, the time of national service without proper payment of my salary was too long. In total, I was not able to see any future for my personal and educational development in Eritrea. Hence, I migrated to the UK through the Sudan-Turkey-Greece-France route.

The standard salary for a national service recruit is about 800 Eritrean Nakfa (about £40) per month (Home Office, 2018). This amount hardly covers an average monthly house (one-bedroom flat) rent in Asmara, the capital. In this case, recruits see migration as an alternative to gain control of their lives and develop their professional and economic capacity.

Issack is another migrant who came to the UK mainly to pursue his academic ambitions. He graduated with a bachelor's degree from the University of Asmara in the early 2000s. Nevertheless, he was entrapped in the national service for a long time, which hindered his academic and professional development. Issack has briefly described his story as bellow:

> The biggest challenge for me in the country was the inability to pursue my dream. I was not able to plan for my life due to the prolonged national service. My ambition had always been to pursue an academic career, and I was certain to get my dream job especially when I started scoring good grades in my first-year study. However, after graduation, I was assigned [by the government] to the Ministry of Defence which affected the opportunity to achieve my dream. I served in the Eritrean Defences

> Forces for five years and, then, reassigned to another ministry to work in the public service sector of the country. I was not really devising my own way. Yet, despite those complications, I was determined to pursue my graduate study. As the government had already discontinued scholarship opportunity to different countries including South Africa [where many government employees had used to go], I started to look for other options. I applied for graduate programmes in Europe and got an offer with a full scholarship, which made me leave the country illegally. Finally, after finishing my study, I moved to the UK and sought asylum.

As shown, Neguse and Issack have mentioned economic and professional factors associated with the extension of the national service and, thus, the migration of people from their country. They reiterated the clash between the determination of the highly educated Eritreans to develop themselves and the policy of the government to keep them at home with little socio-economic and educational opportunities. Moreover, Hans, Kibrom and Solomon support this idea. They noted that the prolonged national service was the main obstacle to further their education and achieve their dreams. Hans said:

> After graduation, I was assigned [by the government] to do my national service in the Ministry of Education. I served as a teacher for one year. I was expecting to further my studies [by pursuing a master's degree], but I also had the feeling that I would not get permission to study considering the ongoing and endless national service. So, I just decided to leave the country.

As can be seen from the excerpts above, elongated national service has affected the development and management of human resources in Eritrea. Many Eritrean university

graduates have been assigned to a position out of their profession as part of their national service. It is not surprising to find a university graduate in the Ministry of Defence doing a job any secondary school graduate can do, and in areas which are unrelated to their qualifications. Besides, most of them have limited opportunities to upgrade their academic and professional capacity. Hence, they consider migration as an alternative to achieve their goals. Similarly, a report by Amnesty International stated that about 90 percent of Eritrean migrants arriving in Europe flee from the country, mainly due to indefinite conscription into national service (Amnesty International, 2015). In addition, a large-scale study by Kibreab (2013, 2017) highlights a similar pattern, with forced migration in the post-independence period occurring, in part, due to compulsory and indefinite national service.

Furthermore, my interviews point towards forced immobility or restricted mobility, characterising Eritrea as one of the few countries requiring their citizens to obtain an exit visa (see Chapter Two). Eritreans are usually restricted from travelling outside the country without finishing their national service (Arapiles, 2015; GSDRC, 2016). Moreover, those who are doing their national service are only allowed to leave the country with special permission from their organisation, required as a condition of their visas. Such permission is obtained mainly to attend a meeting or for human resources development purposes. However, as indicated in the first two chapters, the country is not so easily able to restrict its youth from leaving the country. Many migrate illegally, first to neighbouring countries such as Sudan and Ethiopia and then pursue their journey to other countries, mainly economically developed Western countries like the UK. As discussed in the next section, the routes of these migrants are often illegal, risky and costly.

In addition to the push factors, my participants had some knowledge about socio-economic and political conditions of different countries. The processes of globalisation in general and the internet and television networks, in particular, help people to know more about other countries than before (Adam et al., 1997; Stanojoska & Blagoce, 2012). Some are 'aware of the possibilities the outside world may offer' (Müller, 2018: 979). However, as discussed below, they sometimes get a distorted image of the outside world including their planned destination countries. This supports Lieber and Weisberg's (2002) idea that the information migrants get is not complete or fully reliable. They often try to substantiate it with information from friends and family members who live in different parts of the world. This gives them a basic idea to carry on their journey. Despite being afar, my interviewees were relatively aware of the economic, political and religious freedom they could get in some countries, especially developed Western countries. They felt that their safety would be guaranteed, and their economic status would be improved once they reach their destination (see also Martin & Zürcher, 2008; Parkins, 2010). These pull factors had a significant effect on the Eritrean migrants who participated in my study. These factors triggered the long, costly and risky route to Europe. Without such information, the participants would have asked for asylum and settled in their country of first arrival such as Italy or Greece.

Overall, two key findings emerged: 1) the government's plan to cultivate a law-abiding passive citizen and 2) the effect of critical thinking and, perhaps, personal interest of the citizens. As already noted, the government put in place or amended many rules and regulations, which affect the lives of the people in general and the youth in particular. As Kibreab (2017) argued, the government viewed the national service as a means of preserving and transmitting the EPLF's core values: a sense of selflessness, nationalism and sacrificial patriotism. I concur that these values greatly contributed to the success of the liberation

struggle. As discussed below, I also note that most of my participants have a profound love and dedication to their country and family. However, the difference between the government and many of my participants comes from their differing points of view on: what is considered as patriotic, on what basis, and for whose purpose? In a nutshell, these are the underlying reasons that many of the participants of this research migrated leaving the national service. They contend that there is no need to keep every youth in the national service after the 2002 EEBC decision, and especially in the last decade. In their view, it is an indication of poor human resources management which trapped many in an unproductive work during their productive (youth) age. Most of those in the national service get a monthly payment of about £40 (Home Office, 2018). Besides, the country has been making avoidable expenses to thousands of citizens trapped in the national service. This and other similar issues then raise a vital question:

> What if the ruling élites pursue their own agenda to serve their own sub-national interest in the name of public cause and national interest because concepts such as 'public cause' or 'national interest' can be used as a cover for policies designed by particular sub-national groups to pursue their own interest to the detriment of the whole nation's real interest (Kibreab, 2017: 76).

Many of my participants saw the extension and mismanagement of the national service not only as a challenge to the development of the youth and the nation, but also an instrument for the authoritarian system reigning in Eritrea (see also Riggan, 2016; Müller, 2017). Hence, they decided to leave the country to develop their potential, support their family and, perhaps, become a voice for the transformation of Eritrea to a democratic system.

Moreover, most of my participants indicated that the decisions to migrate to the UK were not discussed with their partners and other significant family members in Eritrea. For example, Wolday stated:

> I did not tell any member of my family including my wife to minimize the risk for both of us. In fact, my wife did the same when leaving Eritrea to the UK for family reunion. She did not even tell her father and mother.

Habtay added that 'I did not inform my mother as she would not have allowed me to leave the country and, thus, not see me again for indefinite time'. These testimonies are common among the participants who left Eritrea through illegal means, and they reveal two important points. First, the participants were concerned that any information leak could jeopardize the entire family's safety, if the information reached the Eritrean security forces. This is associated with the fact that families of draft evaders and deserters are imprisoned or heavily fined (Arapiles, 2015). Second, many families want their partners or children to be with them, despite the challenges they face. Most importantly, they do not want them to risk their lives while crossing the militarized border with Sudan or Ethiopia. Therefore, my participants left their family out of the migration decision. Instead, many discussed their migration decision with friends and families who live abroad. It is also important to note that, in some cases, there is little room for discussion. For example, as indicated above, Meron decided to stay in the UK as returning to Eritrea would endanger his safety. However, those (such as Marry, Yohana and Mehari) who left Eritrea legally for education or other purposes were able to discuss their decision not to return home with their families and friends. For instance, as mentioned above, Mehari decided to remain in Europe after discussing the Eritrean situation with friends and families at home.

5.2.2 Migration Routes

As shown above, highly educated Eritrean migrants are forced to flee their country due to socio-economic and political hardships. My participants entered Western European countries including the UK through three routes: the Sudan-Turkey route, the Mediterranean Sea route, and a direct flight from Eritrea (or other East African countries). Most of them followed the risky, expensive and illegal Sudan-Turkey-Greece-France route to enter the UK. Additionally, some flew from Eritrea (or other East African countries) to the UK for educational purposes or family reunion, whereas others came to the UK after studying in other European countries. Relatively few used the Mediterranean Sea route.

Those who used the Sudan-Turkey-Greece-France route crossed all these countries illegally, and finally entered the UK on a lorry. Kibrom, a secondary school teacher, left Eritrea in 2007 because he did not like the school's working environment. From his perspective, 'The conditions were too harsh, but the payment was unattractive. I could not see a future as a teacher living my life that way'. As a result, he crossed the border to Sudan and entered the UK after a long and depressing journey. Speaking about his journey, Kibrom said:

> My journey experience from Eritrea [to the UK] was not good. I started my migration by going to Sudan. The first week was harsh and I was a bit depressed. I stayed in the camp in Sudan for about three weeks and later left it [the camp] illegally. I went to Khartoum and after three months of staying in the city, I arranged a business visa and continued my journey to the UK through Turkey, Greece and France. I entered the UK on a lorry illegally. Overall, I spent a lot of money to reach the UK.

Kibrom's testimony highlights the vulnerability of my participants during their journey to the UK. They passed through different countries and some even stayed in refugee camps. In addition, as Kibrom noted, they had to acquire a business visa, which exacerbated their psychological distress and economic destitution. Hans, Solomon and Neguse also took a similar route. Neguse explained:

> I migrated to Sudan crossing the border illegally with a couple of my friends. From Sudan, I went to Dubai. After staying for about one month in Dubai, I moved to Turkey and waited for 26 days to travel to Greece on a boat. I lived for about two months in Greece and later crossed to France. Finally, I entered the UK illegally on a lorry.

As can been seen, those migrants chose the Sudan-Turkey-Greece-France route to minimise the risk associated with their journey. However, as indicated above, this does not mean that their journey was smooth. They had to cross many countries using illegal visas or hiding from the authorities. In addition, they were not sure how long and how much the journey could take. They also had to hide deep in the back of a lorry to reach the UK. They believed that the probability of losing one's life in this route is lower than the incidents that could happen on the Mediterranean Sea. Reports show that the number of deaths between the routes is incomparable (see IOM, 2017a; Mclntyre & Rice-Oxley, 2018). Berhane and Amir came to the UK through the Mediterranean Sea. After entering Sudan, they travelled to Libya through the Sahara Desert. Then, they crossed the Mediterranean Sea to reach Italy. In Italy, the migrants escaped being caught by police and sent to a migrant reception camp. Instead, they continued their journey to France and finally reached the UK. All these participants emphasised that they travelled in very harsh conditions and finally reached the UK destitute.

Some of my participants crossed to the UK after travelling to another European country for educational or other purposes. A few others also directly flew from Eritrea or other East African countries to the UK for education, conferences or other reasons and sought asylum in the country. For example, Marry first left Eritrea to go to Kenya, and later came to another European country for study. Nonetheless, she moved to the UK to seek asylum without finishing her studies. Haben and Yohana also shared similar stories.

> I first crossed the border of Eritrea illegally and entered Sudan to flee religious persecution. From Sudan, I went to another European country for educational purpose. Then, I travelled to the UK and sought asylum without finishing my study. (Haben)

> I left Eritrea in 2011 due to lack of progress in my professional development and economic status in the country. I first flew to another European country and later travelled to the UK where I applied for asylum at the airport. (Yohana)

Migrants like Meron and Senait directly entered the UK from Asmara or other African countries. As stated earlier, Meron came to the UK for a conference and sought asylum since he felt insecure about returning home, whereas Simret and Senait travelled to the UK from another African country.

> I left Eritrea and migrated to another East African country, intending to come to the UK and live a better life. I got a UK visa after staying for a year in the country. Then, I sought asylum to remain in the UK. (Senait)

My interviews indicate that the majority of the highly educated migrants tried to minimise the risks associated with their journey by using safer routes to reach their destination. Few of my participants used the notorious Mediterranean Sea route to come to Europe. However, most of those migrants who entered the UK through a direct flight or long and risky routes were all vulnerable people, struggling to avoid insecurity and economic hardships and live a better life. The majority of them paid a high price financially, morally and physically to reach the UK. In fact, they were forced to become (or change their status to) asylum seekers or refugees, and cast as 'unwanted invaders' (Parker, 2015: 15) or 'faceless threat' (Innes, 2015: 26; see also Innes, 2016 and Kokkonen, 2017) by the media. The tabloid media could affect the perception of the host societies and institutions towards migrants and refugees, and this could intensify racism towards and embarrassment among immigrants (De Peyer, 2017; Grice, Watts & Dearden, 2017; Moreau, 2016).

The participants of this research paid a significant amount of money to reach the UK. For instance, Kibrom paid about 400 Euros for lorry transportation from Calais to London. According to *Trading Economics* (2018), the annual Gross Domestic Product per capita in Eritrea was last recorded as US $514 (in 2011). Eritrean migrants thus pay a huge amount of money, compared to their annual income. However, many of my participants stated that the amount of money they paid was not only to flee the socio-economic and political hardships in Eritrea, but also to improve their future and make their dream a reality. They were certain that they would stay for a significant period in their host country. They do not intend to return to their country of origin until the push factors are alleviated, while some have no intention of returning at all.

Asked how they got the money needed to travel from Eritrea to the UK, many alluded to the financial support received from friends and family (including members of their extended family), who were mainly based outside Eritrea. This shows that the diasporic people, who live outside their respective homelands, have a strong connection with their country of origin, particularly their family and friends. It substantiates the account of Bernal (2006) and Newland and Partick (2004): through remittances and social networks, the diasporic people influence the socio-economic condition of the people including potential migrants. They offer financial support and advice to potential migrants. Upon arrival of new migrants, the diaspora also becomes a hub to strengthen communal identity and provide familiar support systems including family and cultural supports (Faist, 2000). As Fanus stated, 'It is mainly connected with getting necessary support and love from family, friends and others, and feeling at home far from home'. It seems, then, that diasporic people affect the migration and migration patterns of individuals in their country of origin. Nevertheless, as explained below, it is important to note that the UK's dispersion policy and the lack of strong Eritrean community in the country affect the level of support offered to new Eritrean immigrants.

5.3 Joy and Hope

5.3.1 Bliss: 'Finally in a democratic state'

As indicated above, my participants paid a high price physically, financially and psychologically to reach the UK and free themselves from persecution and other human rights abuses and to improve their economic situation. Therefore, they were happy to reach their destination after, in most cases, a long and dangerous journey. They hoped to start a new, decent life soon after arrival.

My research shows that reaching the UK eased the migrants' and their families' concerns. It also ended the migrants' migration journey expenses including their smuggling fees and daily expenses. As stated above, the participants of this research paid a lot of money for business visa, transportation and other costs to reach the UK. In fact, most of them relied on family members or friends living abroad. Therefore, reaching their destination was the end of these expenses. Additionally, many had travelled thousands of miles through illegal and life-threatening routes with death a common outcome. Mclntyre and Rice-Oxley (2018) noted that 34,361 migrants died at sea crossing to Europe, in detention blocks, asylum units and even town centres in the past 25 years. The IOM (2017a) further reported that 7,763 people lost their lives during migration to international destinations in 2016, out of which 230 were from the Horn of Africa. Consequently, it is usually a big relief for migrants to reach their destination and look for the next chapter of their lives despite the trauma and high cost of doing so.

Thus, many participants indicated that they were happy to reach the UK, a democratic and English-speaking country (Trueman, 2015). For instance, Hans and Kibrom explained that they were pleased to reach the UK where they can live freely, study in a field that they chose, and pursue their dream. Explaining this, Kibrom said, 'I was a bit relieved thinking that I am in a democratic state [to live freely and pursue my dream]'. He was speaking in comparison to Eritrea, where the youth are mostly restricted from chasing their dream due to socio-economic and political factors. Similarly, Issack shared that he was very happy and optimistic when he finally arrived in the UK. He thought that the democratic values of the country would enable him to live without any fear. Along with Haben, Issack favoured the UK for its English language.

> I know that I have to be safe and get a residence permit to live legally. This was the foundation of my choice for coming to the UK. I need a conducive environment where I can live peacefully and develop my potential. The UK is one of the best countries in all dimensions, including respecting human rights. It offers an opportunity to be a good citizen which is difficult in many other countries. The UK does not send back Eritrean refugees to their country. Besides, the English language, which I speak a little bit, is a plus when coming to this country. (Issack)

> I came here to flee from religious persecution in Eritrea. It is also probably because of the English language, which I can speak well. Back home, we study in English starting from junior school to university. We have some knowledge about the language which might help us to integrate and do some basic jobs. But it would be very difficult if you go to other European countries. (Haben)

The above testimonies highlight the participants' knowledge of the social-cultural and economic conditions of the UK, and how it influenced their choice and expectations. Issack and Haben stated three significant reasons for choosing the UK: English language, asylum recognition rate and future opportunity. As shown above, they knew that the UK is a democratic country, which offers many asylum seekers refugee status. In fact, both emphasised that their happiness about reaching the UK emanated from the assumption that the country would accept their application for asylum, and they would be able to start a new and better life. This information often comes from the fact that the UK had hosted thousands of Eritrean refugees who sought asylum in the country. Moreover, Issack was aware that the country is hesitant to deport rejected asylum seekers to Eritrea because the repercussions from the government of Eritrea could be harsh (Home Office, 2018). He also knew the rights

and opportunities that the UK could offer for his personal freedom and professional development. This suggests that my participants analysed their information in accordance with their expectations and opportunities in their host countries. They wanted to live in a country which gives them a better life and an opportunity to start afresh. Above all, they did not want their children to experience the uncertainty they went through in Eritrea.

Furthermore, English is not only the most widely spoken language of the UK; it is also the dominant language in the world. It is the medium of instruction in many countries including Eritrea, and the undisputed language of science and technology (Nunan, 2003). Thus, in the UK, my participants saw an opportunity to socialise with the host people and gain access to essential services using their English capacity (see Chapter Six). They can also join different companies and universities to gain new work experience and qualification respectively. Indeed, their English capacity was vital in the integration process in the UK. The same is true when they travel to other countries. They do not have to worry about the language of communication since English is the 'operating system' of the global conversation (British Council, 2013: 2).

5.3.2 Hope: 'Get asylum and realise my dream'

My participants perceived reaching the UK as a closing chapter of their suffering and the beginning of what they described as their 'dream life'. They stated that their sense of delight when arriving in the UK was, partly, connected to their economic and professional aspirations. As noted earlier, the highly educated Eritrean migrants came to the UK with considerable work experience in addition to their educational qualifications. Meron and Issack noted that, upon arriving in the UK, they expected to soon get their residence permit and realise their dream, thus, get a professional job to support themselves and their family.

For instance, Issack commented that he was happy to enter the UK, emphasising that he could 'study and work hard' to realise his ambition. Similarly, Meron said, 'I hoped to use my educational qualification to enter the UK job market and pursue further studies'. Participants like Neguse and Semhar also wanted to pursue further studies to change their career direction and improve their career prospects.

Overall, the migrants' above statements are mainly connected to two points. First, they thought that they would soon be given refugee status. Second, they hoped that their prior educational qualifications, work experiences and English capacities would help them to secure a professional job in the UK. The following excerpts further explain the perception and aspiration of the migrants in relation to their economic and professional growth.

> I thought that things are so easy in the UK. I used to think that people in the UK have mansions, a luxurious life, etc. I used to think that when I work hard, I would be financially rich and would do whatever I want. (Senait)

> I was expecting to get my dream job: to work with financial regulation company or to be a government expert [as per my qualification]. Of course, I knew I might face some challenges such as lack of UK qualification and experience. (Michael)

The above excerpts show the participants' perception of life in the UK. Senait in a way takes some responsibility for her inflated image of life in the UK. She partly saw herself as part of the problem for the discrepancy she found between her high expectations and the reality. She eventually found out that not all the expectations are correct because not everybody can afford a lavish life, especially a mansion. However, handwork could provide financial

security. As can be seen from his statement, Michael was aware of the challenges that he might face. He understood the effect of not having a UK qualification and coming from a different cultural background. Michael noted that lack of local experience and full cultural understanding affected his swift socio-cultural integration into the UK. This shows that, contrary to the migrants' perception, education credentials gained in Eritrea are not a guarantee for swift access to a professional position in the UK.

As discussed in the next chapter, along with Michael, many of my participants noted that having UK qualifications and experience was desirable and, perhaps, necessary. Foreign qualifications and job experience gained in Eritrea are less likely to be recognised as equal to those from the UK or those of migrants from developed countries (Garrido & Codó, 2017; Wilson-Forsberg, 2015). Moreover, Eritrean migrants' fluency in English can be considered insignificant in the job market. Ermias and Senait changed to other fields because they were not able to continue a career in journalism. Ermias said that, in addition to the Eritrean qualification, his 'English proficiency and accent' have been the main challenges. Therefore, as the interviews from this study show, most highly educated Eritrean migrants are required to upgrade their education and start afresh. Consequently, many of my participants went back to college to obtain a UK educational qualification (see Chapter Six for more).

Moreover, many participants disclosed that reaching the UK was a dream come true to study in their area of interest. They explained that in Eritrea they were forced to join a specific undergraduate department. The following stories of Neguse and Semhar endorse this claim.

> I had a bachelor's degree in social science from the University of Asmara, but here I did not want to continue in that area. Back home, there was not enough room for

> students to be placed in their choice of specialism because there were limited space and high competition of students in many departments. Like many students, I was placed by the university to study in one of the departments in social science. However, in the UK, I can study a programme of my choice. My interest was to study business. So, I shifted from Social Science to Business and Economics. (Neguse)

> My dream was to finish my undergraduate study in medical sciences. However, due to the limited space in the University of Asmara, only few [students] were given the opportunity to study that programme. Then, I was forced to join another department in the College of Science. Coming to the UK was a big opportunity to make my dream a reality. (Semhar)

Due to the small number of HEIs and lack of expertise in different fields, students in Eritrea are not able to study their area of interest. Only those with the highest Grade Point Average (GPA) can secure a place in one of their first two choices of specialism. As Neguse explained, others are dispersed by the university's admission office to other programmes with available spaces, although their third or subsequent choices are considered. However, the large number of universities and programmes in the UK provide students with better opportunities to study a programme of their choice. Neguse and Semhar told me that their plan, after getting their asylum decision, was to go to university and earn another degree in their area of interest, thus realising their aspirations. However, getting asylum is not an easy and smooth process. Thus, the early experiences of my respondents were not only filled with exciting moments; there were also vulnerable and hazardous situations. The following section discusses the migrants' vulnerability.

5.4 Vulnerability

Bustamante (2009: 565) stated that 'the vulnerability of migrants is understood as a heterogeneously imposed condition of powerlessness'. In this section, I point out that the application for asylum is a lengthy and complicated process which puts migrants in a vulnerable situation. In doing so, I show that the early experience of migrants was filled not only with memories of joy and hope, but also of exclusion, uncertainty, nostalgia and anxiety.

5.4.1 Embarrassment: 'Seeking asylum is a humiliation'

Contrary to their hope and expectations, my participants were exposed to humiliation, powerlessness, exclusion, uncertainty, fear, and other difficult conditions on arrival. As many explained, these situations led to anxiety and psychological distress. Many participants in this research explained that they feel humiliated because of their refugee status. While many researchers (for example, Fangen, 2006; Hartling & Luchetta, 1999; Klein, 1991) have found direct personal attack, harassment or scorn as the main causes of humiliation for migrants, my participants did not find this to be so. Moreover, the majority of my participants stated that they did not face any 'overt discrimination' in the UK -- a striking finding considering the extensive evidence showing that refugees experience discrimination. Their feeling of embarrassment was mostly associated with the discourses of the tabloid media (see Innes, 2015, 2016; Parker, 2015) and the country's political climate which view refugees as a problem (see De Peyer, 2017; Grice, Watts & Dearden, 2017; Moreau, 2016).

Simon, Marry and Yohana indicated that they were terrified by the tabloid media discourses on illegal migration. They felt unwelcome to the UK, where right-wing forces cast unauthorised, undocumented, or illegal migration as a threat to national security (Innes, 2015; Wohlfeld, 2014). My research unveils that this negatively affected the psychological

condition of the migrants, exposing them to fear and insecurity. It made them feel unwelcomed and humiliated. They were also forced to hide their asylum-seeker identity due to embarrassment, and fear of negative reactions from the host society (Stewart, 2005). These feelings suggest that my participants internalised the deficit discourse and they become affected on a psychological level. Similarly, Kokkonen (2017) explained that the rhetoric used by the UK media, particularly the tabloids, contribute to the production of stereotypes, prejudices and eventually racism by representing migrants as outsiders. The representation of refugees and asylum seekers as threats also makes them vulnerable (Innes, 2015, 2016; Parker, 2015). However, as 'vagabonds' who experienced war, persecution and economic hardships in their home countries (Bauman, 1996), getting asylum was a matter of life or death for many. Therefore, they focused on finding any valid reasons to make their asylum case sound and fit the Home Office guidelines for seeking asylum. Migrants must be unable to live safely in any part of their own country in order to claim asylum to stay in the UK as refugees (Home Office, 2016a).

Furthermore, seeking asylum in a crowded place, such as airports, makes the vulnerability and humiliation of migrants worse (see also Lindner, 2001). Marry and Yohana sought asylum in one of London's airports and felt that they were on the spotlight with people judging them--the so-called 'unwanted intruders'. Marry emphasised that 'seeking asylum is humiliation by itself'. She is a graduate of the University of Asmara who left Eritrea legally in 2009 and came to the UK without finishing the studies she started in another European country. Marry's asylum experience began with fear and embarrassment. She said, 'I was very nervous and embarrassed to ask for asylum at the airport'. Similarly, Yohana explained, 'My initial experience in the UK was scary as I had no idea what would happen. I was scared; that is what I remember'. She continued:

> It feels odd to ask for asylum at the airport. I felt vulnerable, scared and helpless. I had no idea what to expect. I stayed that night at the airport guarded by the police. Then, I was taken to a hostel.

As Yohana stated, her feelings of shame started at the airport where she stayed the whole night under police custody. She was also embarrassed by the fact that she had to wait for the government's financial aid despite her higher education qualification and work experience. Besides, she was worried about her asylum case because it could greatly determine her future. Yohana further emphasised that her fear and insecurity continued until her application for asylum was accepted. Marry and many other participants echoed this and complained about lack of information regarding the progress of their asylum application. Although they met and interacted with some asylum seekers at the hostel they were assigned to, they noted that these interactions did not diminish their worries. The stories circulating about rejected asylum seekers also perpetuated their feelings of embarrassment, anxiety and insecurity. Therefore, they prepared to convince the Home Office by any means necessary, even misrepresenting their actual experiences. Yohana told me:

> My biggest fear was preparing for the Home Office interview because I used to hear many stories. People were also telling me different stories on how to convince the Home Office. Some of the things, I do not believe in them, but I had to say them to get my application accepted. I remember, for the first ten days, I was busy preparing myself for the interview. My Home Office interview only lasted for about half an hour. It seems that they were convinced by what I said, but I could not know the result until I get it. Therefore, I had to wait for the decision, which was positive.

As can be seen, Yohana gave the Home Office some inaccurate information in order to secure her asylum paper. She misrepresented part of her experiences not because her asylum case did not meet the Home Office eligibility criteria, but she was influenced by other refugees and wanted to maximise the likeliness to be granted asylum. Yohana got her asylum paper as expected, but she feels guilty of cheating. Michael's statement indicates that some participants' feelings of vulnerability are associated with seeking asylum. Consequently, some react by adding inaccurate stories while others conceal part of their experiences especially if they have been living in other European countries. He said:

> Becoming a refugee makes you vulnerable. I was not sure what could be the best reason to apply for asylum. In fact, many people advised me to do different things, including changing my name. Despite not changing my name, I did not inform the Home Office that I had finished my study in another European country before coming to the UK. All these points made my asylum time depressing. (Michael)

As noted above, Michael entered the UK after finishing his studies in another European country. However, as with most of my participants who entered the UK from another European country, he did not declare his presence in this other country because he was afraid it could jeopardise his asylum process. The 2003 Dublin Regulation indicates that the State where the asylum seeker first entered the European Union is responsible for examining an asylum application (Council of the European Union, 2003). Migrants whose fingerprints and biometrics were taken in their first arrival European country could be identified and sent back to that country. To facilitate this, in 2011, the Home Office joined the 'Eurodac fingerprint database which 'collects the fingerprints of asylum seekers and some illegal entrants to the

European Union (EU)'and allows electronic data sharing between member states (The Guardian, 2011). The aim of the database is to prevent multiple asylum applications and determine who is responsible under the Dublin Regulation for dealing with an asylum claim.

Overall, my participants were embarrassed and distressed by their asylum status. They were convinced that asylum denial could put their lives in a precarious condition. Therefore, some of my participants gave incorrect information to strengthen their asylum application and obtain refugee status. At the same time, my data show that they are not comfortable with making false statements and hiding parts of their identity. Many participants described this as a desperate act to make their dream a reality. However, such false statements can have negative consequences on their socio-economic and psychological conditions. For instance, some feel guilty for lying to the Home Office. The following section further discusses the uncertainty and fear of asylum seekers.

5.4.2 Uncertainty and Fear: 'You can even get rejected'

According to the Nationality, Asylum and Immigration Act 2002, migrants should claim asylum as soon as they arrive in the UK in order to obtain accommodation and other state support (Home Office, 2002). However, early application for asylum does not guarantee an early and positive decision from the Home Office. Indeed, fear of asylum rejection has been the cause of suicide for some Eritrean asylum seekers in the UK as they are terrified to return home (see Taylor, 2019). Roundtree (2018) reported, 'Four young Eritrean asylum seekers have taken their own lives in the UK in the past year after being smuggled across the Channel from Calais' Jungle'. Such a situation reveals the amount of stress that the Eritrean asylum seekers would be exposed to if the decision for their asylum application is 'not to award refugee status' or 'delayed'. Some of my participants perceived that there is a connection

between the strength of the presented evidence and the length of waiting time for an initial decision. Hence, their worry increased with the delay in receiving the asylum decision. However, my study suggests that the strength of the asylum case does not necessarily shorten the decision time. Some of my participants supported their application with sufficient evidence, but their case was decided after six months. The interviews conducted for this study show that the application for asylum is a long and stressful process, which puts the migrants in an uncertain, powerless and dreadful situation.

Many of the participants emphasised that life in the UK was not up to their expectations. They depended on the Home Office decisions to start a new life and found that, as the decision for their asylum application took time, their joy faded and their concern increased. The worst part was the uncertainty caused by delays in the decision on their applications for asylum. They told me that they were not ready for rejection, but they felt powerless to defend themselves. Many participants explained that these situations were a source of nostalgia, anxiety, frustration and depression. In addition, as indicated above, the rumours and stories of rejections that the migrants heard from others exacerbated their negative emotions, confirming and lending further insight into the findings of earlier research showing that migrants experience social and psychological problems (Maydell-Stevens, Masggoret & Ward, 2007; Vinokur 2006; Zembylas, 2012).

The following accounts are presented to explore the vulnerability of my participants in relation to their feelings of powerlessness, uncertainty and fear. Kibrom, for example, noted that waiting for the decision on asylum caused him anxiety. Like most other participants, he was happy to have reached the UK and had thought that he would soon get his refugee status and find a job to help his family.

> After reaching London, I went to the Home Office in Croydon the next day and applied for asylum. I stayed there for a day and they sent me to a refugee reception centre in Leeds. I stayed there for about a month and then re-housed to Newcastle. I was interviewed for my asylum process while I was in Newcastle. The first four months were very stressful because I was waiting for a decision on my asylum application. I waited to be recognised as a refugee [which allows me to stay in the UK]. I could not do anything; just sit, eat and sleep. It was a bit frustrating. The difficult thing was that I could not contact the Home Office before six months of my asylum application. Therefore, I had to wait for six months to ask about the process. Luckily, I got a positive decision in the fifth month. (Kibrom)

Helen is another participant caught in uncertainty for six months. She migrated from Eritrea, leaving the teaching profession.

> After coming to the UK, I was taken to Liverpool. I waited for six months to get my papers [refugee status]. I had nothing to do except doing voluntary work and going to the library. In fact, with all the stress of waiting for my papers, I was not able to do that much [to develop my capacity]. I came thinking that I would get my papers straight away and start a new life; but, in reality, it was not like that. If you are lucky, you can get your paper within two weeks. If not, it [the asylum decision] can take a long time and you can even be rejected. Many people had been rejected at that time, and this affected my life. (Helen)

Kibrom and Helen complained about the delay in asylum decision. In fact, their asylum decision was given within the Home Office timeframe -- six months. Yet, they felt stressed due to their exclusion from work and loneliness. In addition, like Helen, most of my participants expected to receive their asylum papers in a short period. However, it took months, which affected their socio-emotional conditions. This suggests that many migrants experience negative emotions associated with their refugee status, their application decision and the aftermath situation. Lack of information and uncertainty about refugee status were significant sources of stress (Crocker, 2015). Moreover, as Cannon (1994) noted, the vulnerabilities caused by delays in the decision on asylum applications create further vulnerabilities. They become sources of nostalgia and anxiety. The participants noted that they missed their families and warm culture (communal life) and felt homesick. Nevertheless, it is important to note that uncertainty and nostalgia did not make them want to return to Eritrea. As indicated above, they were afraid of returning to Eritrea because they might face imprisonment or persecution for staying outside of the country without seeking the prior permission of the government of Eritrea.

Furthermore, Ermias explained that he was unable to get his residence permit and national insurance number for a long time. He left Eritrea illegally and came to the UK to avoid the long national service. Regarding his early experiences in the UK, he stated:

> Well…. in the beginning, it was a bit difficult. To be honest, my expectations and the reality that I faced here were not compatible. In the beginning, I expected that everything would be easy, and I would soon achieve my ambitions. Nevertheless, the reality on the ground was different. As soon as I came, I was looking to go to college

> or to be in the system, but it took me a very long time to get my residence permit. The beginning was like uphill.

Ermias' point summarises that getting refugee status is the key to lifting many of the restrictions asylum seekers face in the UK (see Home Office, 2014). Without it, they cannot integrate into the UK 'system' which many of my participants use to indicate getting a 'UK residence and other relevant documents' that allow them to study and work in the country. Another important point raised above is the expectation that my participants had and the reality they faced on arrival to the UK. As can be seen, my participants were excited to reach their destination and start a new life. Nevertheless, their happiness and excitement faded as they started preparing their asylum applications and waiting for the decision. As a result, they experienced emotions such as fear, depression, anxiety, panic, and anger. It is also significant to note that many of the participants had been exposed to pre-migration traumatic experiences, which are key factors producing depression and other mental health problems (Hollifield et al., 2018).

5.4.3 Exclusion and Loneliness: 'I was completely lost'

As shown above, people migrate to flee from socio-economic and political hardships. Yet, they experience a different type of vulnerability after they become migrants since they lack or lose vital resources such as family support (Bustamante, 2009). Similarly, in my study, I found that exclusion and loneliness are two of the main conditions that the participants experienced, particularly during their asylum-seeking time in the UK. They disclosed that, in addition to exclusion from work and the new culture, the dispersion policy of the Home Office negatively affected their lives. This supplements Stewart's (2005) findings which revealed the marginalisation of asylum seekers through dispersion and other policies.

My participants explained that they were excluded from contributing to the economic development of their origin and host countries, and the world in general. They were not allowed to work, and travel to other countries before getting their permit to stay in the UK, which sometimes takes more than six months. According to the Home Office (2014), asylum seekers can only apply for permission to work if they have been waiting for over twelve months to get an initial decision on their asylum application. As a result, Kibrom and Helen, for example, felt marginalised (see also Stewart, 2005). Consequently, these people were not able to support themselves and their families who, in most cases, depend on them financially. However, as shown above, some participants engaged in voluntary work with the intention of using their time to help other migrants and gain some work experience.

The Home Office offers asylum seekers minimal basic facilities and links refugees with other organisations and agents to provide them with additional support (Home Office, 1998; 1999). Nevertheless, many participants noted that food and accommodation were not enough to ease their fear and make them feel at home. In fact, most of my participants did not come to the UK looking for charity, but protection and opportunity to support themselves socially and financially. This starts with a legal residence paper to live and work in the country, and extends to socio-cultural, economic and political inclusion (Stewart, 2005). Marry told me that the Home Office provided her with an allowance of about £37 a week and accommodation. Yet, this was not enough to relieve the stress and anxiety she experienced.

> When I asked for asylum at the airport, I was first taken to Cardiff. I was made to stay in a hostel for about seven months with other asylum seekers like myself. I was completely lost for the first three months. I was feeling lonely and worried about my

> status. I was not familiar with the place and culture. Thus, I could not even go to downtown alone. Finally, I was given my refugee status after seven months. (Marry)

Marry's problem was beyond food and shelter. She needed a family or society to embrace her, as they did in Eritrea. Instead, she found herself lonely and moving from one place to another, which increased the nostalgia she had been feeling for her home and family in Eritrea. Similarly, Semhar affirmed that the experiences of exclusion and loneliness were difficult. She left Eritrea illegally, primarily to avoid the long national service and religious persecution. She finally reached the UK through another European country in 2010. Talking about her early experiences in the UK, she explained:

> To be honest, it was not like what I expected to be. There were times when I missed home badly. There were times when I missed my family, my friends, my environment, and the weather back home. I used to remember the warm house and the coal stove that we used to heat our house during cold weather. Nevertheless, here, it was as if I was locked in one room. I hardly used to mix with my neighbours. Therefore, it was a difficult experience as a refugee from Eritrea because we have a warm culture back home in Eritrea. We do not need a professional counsellor in Eritrea as everybody is our counsellor. Here, I was confined in one place, which almost got me depressed; and it was difficult to get support. Luckily, I got some friends and family in the UK. So, that helped a little bit. But, as a refugee, you can struggle, and lack of support makes it worse.

As indicated above, Semhar stated that refugees face three main challenges in their host country: new culture, separation from family and friends, and lack of support, which link to

nostalgia, loneliness and depression. Her statement suggests that Eritrean social life has some advantages over the UK's. Many participants of this study reverberated this sentiment referring to the warm weather and communal life of societies in Eritrea. This issue is not only connected to Britain's social life which is viewed as 'the loneliest country in the EU' (Stone, 2017), but also to the dispersion of asylum seekers. The Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 indicates that a 'no-choice' based provision of housing should be made to asylum seekers (Home Office, 1999). This Act is intended to disperse asylum seekers around the UK in clusters (BBC, 1999), and reduce the concentration of asylum seekers living and working in key areas such as London and the South-East of England (The Guardian, 2009). The Act, therefore, prevents migrants' freedom to choose where to live (Stewart, 2005), removing their chance of living with or near their family, friends or other members of the Eritrean community, which would provide them with social and psychological support. In line with this, my participants emphasised that they cannot decide where to live until their application for asylum is accepted. From their perspective, asylum seekers have limited control over their lives. Moreover, my study shows that resettlement and family separation aggravated feelings of homesickness among my participants.

Family separation was, thus, prevalent among my sample. Some had left their family in Eritrea and they were not certain when they would see them again. This means that my participants had fewer or no familiar support systems including support from their family and the local community, corroborating the study by Smart and Smart(1995). The lack of good communication networks, including the unavailability of mobile data network services in Eritrea, also hinder frequent meetings and conversations with their families. In contrast, those participants who have close family or friends in the UK were able to get social, financial and psychological support. Ermias, Helen, Habtay and Semhar are some of my respondents who

benefitted from friends and/or family members in the UK. As noted earlier, Semhar stated that having support and guidance from family and friends is very important. Ermias and Habtay further said:

> It is important to understand the UK's way of life. For me, it was not difficult especially as I had supportive colleagues, friends and family [in the UK]. In fact, the support started from Eritrea while I was deciding to migrate and choose a destination. It continued until I was settled. However, it is important during the initial stage of arrival in the UK because at the start life was a bit difficult. (Ermias)

> I had friends who went through similar challenges in the UK. I have to say that I was lucky enough to meet them in the UK and get their support, information and advice on what I should do and should not do. As the [UK] system does not have tailor-made support, family and friend networks are good in helping us [refugees] to integrate into the system. This is also important when refugees become homeless and face any challenges. (Habtay)

Many of my participants had at least one family member or friend in the UK. They used to reach their family and friends through telephone and other networks even if they had to live in another part of the country. They explained that sometimes they used to share their problems and concerns with these family members and friends and listen to their experience or advice. They noted that the support from their family or friends was significant in easing their anxiety. However, virtual communication could not be as effective as face-to-face (Lee et al., 2011). In addition, distance affects the level and frequency of communication. Overall, my data show that migrants need a strong social and structural support system to openly

express their emotions and get relevant assistance. Furthermore, it suggests that the support system is effective when it comes from individuals who have full understanding of the migrants' experiences and the new environment.

My respondents asserted that the best support comes from those who understand and share their socio-cultural background. They also suggested that one way to build a good support system is to develop a strong diaspora community and create a platform to share experiences and help the newcomers. Similarly, research indicates that well-organised diaspora communities make migration easier and accelerate socio-cultural integration (Beine, Docquier & Özden, 2011; Collier & Hoeffler, 2014). However, it is apparent that many countries wish to avoid facilitating such supportive circumstances, especially in the context of the rise of far-right populisms and nationalisms. Instead, they create socio-economic and political conditions, which exacerbate racism and hatred towards immigrants (De Peyer, 2017; Grice, Watts & Dearden, 2017; Moreau, 2016).

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter explores the early experiences of highly educated Eritrean migrants in the UK, with a specific emphasis on their hopes and vulnerabilities. It also addresses the causes and routes of their migration to fully understand their experiences. Drawing upon Bauman's (1996) concept of 'vagabonds', the findings show that most of the participants of this research are forced migrants or refugees. The Ethio-Eritrean border war and the aftermath paved the way for the erosion of the rule of law, gross violation of human rights, and lengthy national service. These halted the dream of highly educated Eritreans to advance their knowledge and contribute to the nation-building process, and forced them to leave their country. They paid a heavy financial and emotional price and travelled through risky routes

to reach the UK. This finding supports Laub's (2015) and UNHCR's (2018a) suggestions that refugees take a long, costly and risky route to reach their destination.

The chapter also discusses the routes of the migrants, and shows that the risky and painful journey is not over upon reaching their destination. It is followed by a cold reception, apprehension and powerlessness (Stewart, 2005). The participants explained that they felt relieved to reach a democratic and English-speaking country. However, their happiness faded when they found themselves trapped in the long asylum application process. Considering the push factors in Eritrea, the risky route they travelled and the high price they paid to reach the UK, they hoped to get a positive decision on their asylum application immediately. They thought that they would start a new life and pursue their dream without losing any time. Nevertheless, the asylum application in the UK is a long and complicated process which excludes asylum seekers by disallowing them to work and distributing them to different places (Home Office, 2014). As the participants stated, they became vulnerable, and uncertain about their lives and future (Bustamante, 2009). Indeed, they felt embarrassed for coming 'uninvited'. Yet the only option they saw was to do whatever necessary to get their permit to live in the UK, even by distorting their stories or information. Even though they were not happy to cheat, they viewed it as a means to facilitate their application for asylum.

Furthermore, this chapter highlights the role of 'pull factors' by analysing the effect of globalisation and diaspora. Globalisation has changed the way many people see the world and their lives (Stanojoska & Blagoce, 2012). Through different networks such as the internet, television and diaspora networks, my participants were able to understand the socio-economic and political conditions of different countries and the living standards of their citizens. This increased awareness of their problems and motivated them to migrate,

expecting a quick start-over and perhaps lavish lifestyle. However, my study further indicates that not all of their expectations were correct. As a result, hoping to find a welcoming home, many met a hostile environment. This was often confusing and distressing, and, in many cases, caused psychological problems.

CHAPTER SIX

EXPECTATIONS, CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES TO FIT IN

> The point of my work is to show that culture and education are not simply hobbies or minor influences. They are hugely important in the affirmation of differences between groups and social classes and in the reproduction of those differences (Pierre Bourdieu)[11]

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I focus on the journey of my participants after receiving their asylum paper. First, I explore the expectations of the migrants and the reality they faced. Then, I analyse their journey and strategies to integrate into the new context, the UK. I show that, despite various challenges, highly educated Eritrean migrants are global citizens who hold secular and open worldviews and embrace cultural differences with the host population. Yet, holding secular and open worldviews is not enough to integrate into a new culture and get access to required services.

My findings indicate that, contrary to their expectation, many of the skills and expertise held by the majority of participants in this research are considered insufficient in the UK. Hence, they used their educational qualifications to gain additional knowledge, skills and experiences, which helped them to integrate into the host country. As indicated in the previous chapter, they went back to college to pursue their studies in order to gain a UK qualification. They also opted to volunteer in different institutions to gain local work experience. This helped them to nurture additional experiences and multiple (multicultural)

[11]Cited in Los Angeles Times, 2002

identities to deal with cultural differences they found between their lives in Eritrea and the UK.

6.2 Expectations and Reality

Building on the previous chapter, this section highlights the fact that the highly educated Eritrean migrants who participated in this study came to the UK with high expectations. They often believed that their educational qualifications would enable them to easily integrate into the new context and society, with little help from friends and/or family members. However, the reality was different for most of the participants. Indeed, having a degree alone was not enough to integrate into the UK. Other factors such as the type of educational credentials and job experiences, level of English language capacity and cultural differences greatly affected the socio-cultural and economic integration of the migrants into the UK. I now analyse the expectations and challenges of the highly educated Eritrean migrants one by one.

6.2.1 Educational Qualification: 'I have a degree from a recognised university'

Research shows that higher education qualification helps immigrants to integrate to the established population and the labour market (Fokkema & de Haas, 2011; Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007). Similarly, my participants thought that their qualifications would enable them to integrate into the host culture and job market. Nevertheless, I found that academic qualification does not guarantee a professional job for migrants, especially those from developing countries. Neither do they ensure a rapid socio-cultural integration of migrants to the host people. Educational qualifications held by migrants from developing countries are constructed as deficient in developed countries (Wilson-Forsberg, 2015; Garrido &Codó, 2017). The testimony of my participants repeatedly confirmed this, showing that the situation is not different in the case of highly educated Eritrean migrants in the UK.

The interviews I conducted indicate that an Eritrean educational credential is not recognised as equivalent to a similar qualification obtained from the UK or other developed countries. This, among others, hindered the hope of the highly educated Eritrean migrants to swiftly integrate to the host country. Many participants told me that they applied to the UK National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC)[12] to get a statement of comparability, an officially recognised document that confirms the recognition of an overseas qualification and its comparable level in the UK. Hoping to get an equal level with the UK qualification, they found that an Eritrean bachelor's degree is recognised as 'advanced diploma' by NARIC. In addition, the advanced diploma recognised by NARIC is not competitive when compared to a UK diploma because the Eritrean qualification lacks some courses relevant to the UK context. This suggests that the education system and curriculum differences between the two countries affect the level and relevance of the Eritrean qualification in the UK (see also Daniel et al., 2010). Hence, the majority of my participants looked for additional training to compete in the UK labour market. The following excerpts evidence this point.

> I came with a big self-inflated image in terms of what I can do with my educational qualification from Eritrea. However, when I came to this country, I understood that it is not easy for someone from overseas educational qualification, especially from non-European countries, to compete for a professional job. (Habtay)

> I thought that someone with a higher education qualification could easily integrate into the socio-economic life of the UK. Nonetheless, I found it difficult due to many reasons including the downgrading of the academic qualification and curriculum

[12]The UK NARIC is the designated United Kingdom national agency for the recognition and comparison of international qualifications and skills.

> differences. The expectation [of easily integrating to the UK] had affected our [the migrants'] life, especially when the degree is downgraded to advanced diploma by NARIC. Besides, some of the courses from the Eritrean higher education institution are country-specific [related to Eritrea]. It needs at least one year [additional study] to make the Eritrean degree equivalent to the UK one. (Meron)

Habtay's and Meron's excerpts highlight how my participants viewed the role of their educational qualifications in the UK. Habtay learned that his qualifications are downgraded in comparison to British ones. He came to understand the difficulty of competing for professional jobs as a result. In addition, Habtay in away perceived that British qualifications as being of a higher standard and, thus, took responsibility for inflating his image or capacity high. Indeed, this affected his morale and vigour as he partly saw himself being the problem. In contrast, Meron mostly complained about the higher education system and devaluation of credentials in Eritrea and the UK, respectively. As can be seen, he is critical of the higher education curriculum in Eritrea and disappointed about NARIC's decision to downgrade the Eritrean qualification in the UK.

I am not surprised when my participants complain about the demotion of their Eritrean degree below the UK one. This devaluation of Eritrean degrees happens although completing an Eritrean bachelor's degree requires longer time and more credit hours than a UK one. A bachelor's degree in Eritrea takes four to five years after passing the ESECE, the national school-leaving examination (NOKUT, 2017). In most specialisations, a bachelor's degree requires four years (eight semesters) of study; but bachelor's degrees in pharmacy, engineering and law (LLB) take five years (ten semesters). The demotion of Eritrean educational qualifications negatively affects the morale and enthusiasm of many highly

educated Eritrean migrants. In fact, some believe that such devaluation is a sign of hostility and structural racism from the host country.

Furthermore, my participants told me that they often struggled to get a professional job related to their Eritrean qualifications. As a result, many of them started by working in semi-skilled or low-skilled occupations. In line with this, Neguse and Hans said:

> When I first got my asylum paper, I started to work manual job in a store because I could not compete for jobs related to my educational qualification. I knew I had a bachelor's degree and I was an experienced teacher in Eritrea. But here [in the UK] I could not simply join the teaching profession because I lack enough knowledge of the system. Besides, I did not have local professional training and adequate cultural awareness. To teach in the UK, you need to have a teaching qualification and full understanding of the local culture. This affected my life not only professionally, but also psychologically. I thought that I lost sixteen years of my life studying for a degree that does not work globally. Hence, I had to find any job to earn a living and help my family. (Neguse)

> My expectations and the reality that I encountered here [in the UK] were opposite. When I came to the UK with my degree, the first thing I thought was that I would use it to find a good [professional] job and live a better life. However, things were different from my expectation here. The value of my educational qualification was not as strong as I thought. In addition, I had to know and understand many things including the local culture, laws and regulations. However, understanding these issues especially people's privacy and wellbeing was not easy. It needs time and a good

> support system. I came from a culture, which values social life. Here, the sensitivity of grooming, abuse and other wellbeing issues makes life and interaction difficult. (Hans)

Neguse and Hans explained the discrepancies between their expectations and the realities they encountered in the UK. In doing so, they indicated that socio-cultural integration is a complicated process, especially for those who come from developing countries like Eritrea. Their statements suggest that the highly educated Eritrean migrants' challenges were not limited to the devaluation of their educational qualifications and work experiences. Other challenges such as lack of knowledge about the local culture, laws and regulations, and inadequate support system were prevalent. Neguse linked these challenges to frustration and psychological distress. In the above excerpt, he blamed the quality of his educational qualification obtained in Eritrea. In support of Meron's earlier argument, Neguse claimed that the inclusion of many country-specific courses could affect the comparability of Eritrean qualifications in the UK. Yet, as indicated above, NARIC also exposes certain migrants to comparative labour-market discrimination in the UK (see Echeverría, 2011).On the other side, Hans is optimistic that a good support system could alleviate some of the problems and, eventually, help migrants to achieve their dreams.

Along with Neguse and Hans, many other participants of this study emphasised that they had to take any job to become more accustomed to the UK context and support their family left in Eritrea. However, the decision to start semi-skilled or unskilled manual jobs negatively affected the professional, social and psychological conditions of the migrants. Some were worried about losing the privilege and social class position, which they, to a certain extent, enjoyed in Eritrea. Speaking about the privilege of having a bachelor's degree in Eritrea,

Neguse said, ‘I was well respected at home [in Eritrea], but here [in the UK] it is different’. This indicates that, despite the hostile socio-economic and political conditions in Eritrea, university graduates relatively have societal respect for their educational achievement and public services. This partly could be associated with the country’s tertiary education GER of 3.36 percent (UNESCO, 2019). However, having a bachelor’s degree is common in the UK, where tertiary education GER reaches 60 percent (UNESCO, 2019). Additionally, as stated above, educational capitals gained in certain countries, particularly developing countries, are less likely to be valued than local educational capital.

Moreover, some of my participants claimed that race-based discrimination in the labour market affects their opportunity of getting a professional job. They also noted that some employers and members of the host people often associate the label ‘refugee’ with someone who has a low level of educational qualification. In fact, Weini said that she does not tell anyone of her personal details, particularly her refugee status. She noted that, in her experience, some people, including employers, have a wrong perception of refugees. In line with this, Stewart (2005: 508) pointed out that many refugees hide their identity to ‘conceal their vulnerable position’. Many view this strategy as an empowering reaction against the structural racism they face in their host countries. Yet, it is worth noting that refugees could be identified through their accent and biographic details. Senait is another participant who stated that race and refugeeness are some of the challenges for highly educated Eritrean migrants in the UK. She worked as a waitress since she could not gain a position related to her qualification. She claimed that structural racism, which systematically excludes BAME people from opportunities, resources and power, might be the main reason for being unsuccessful in one of her job interviews. Senait explained that she volunteered for the company for six months. However, when a full-time employee was required for the same

position, the company selected another person claiming that Senait scored half a point below the selected candidate. She told me:

> I was really upset [about the decision] because I had both the academic qualification and work experience required for the position. Actually, I was not convinced, and I do not know how that happened. I think that I was not selected for the job because I was not born in the UK. After that, my personal life took over; I got married and got a baby.

Senait's perception is unsurprising considering the evidence of racial discrimination against BAME applicants in recruitment practices in Britain (see Bosanquet & Doeringer, 1973; Riach & Rich, 1991; Wood et al., 2009). In fact, the rise of hostile populist rhetoric from politicians and in the tabloid media over immigration shows up the racist trends in the UK (Kokkonen, 2017). Brexit in the UK and the discourses of 'America First' in the USA are evident examples of opposition to global migration, including taking in refugees (see Moreau, 2016). These trends become bad examples to many other countries including developing countries that would like to take similar steps against migrants.

Overall, the highly educated Eritrean migrants who participated in this research felt vulnerable and financially deprived, which in turn affected their socio-cultural integration to the host population. They experienced social declassing (downward social mobility) in their destination country by leaving their middle-class positions in Eritrea and struggling to position themselves in the working class within the UK (see also Bourdieu, 1984; Hansen & Zechner, 2017). In addition, the lack of social and professional growth contrived to their creation of what Verkuyten (2016) calls an 'integration paradox' by causing self-isolation

from the host society. They formed their own networks, which were mostly a network of immigrants with similar conditions.

Members of such networks often try to bring themselves and other colleagues from the periphery to the centre in socio-economic and political terms (Beine, Docquier & Özden, 2011). The Eritrean graduates' network is an evident example which was formed to support Eritrean migrants in the UK to integrate into the country. However, the initiative has not been effective mainly due to the influence of diverse and, perhaps, antagonistic views of the migrants towards the political system in Eritrea. In particular, their divisions as supporters or critics of the Eritrean government affected their unity and teamwork. Hence, the network has been providing inadequate support to Eritrean migrants in the UK.

6.2.2 Work Experience: 'I have many years of work experience'

Employers prefer graduates with relevant work experience (Archer, 2010; Jensen, 2009). Jensen (2009) further suggested that work experience provides individuals with an opportunity to interact with and get to know the workplace, culture, and people. However, my interviewees highlighted that they lacked local work experience to compete in the UK job market. This does not mean that their Eritrean work experience was not significant at all, but it was rarely recognised. In particular, socio-cultural and technological differences between Eritrea and the UK hindered the Eritrean migrants from using the work experiences they gained in Eritrea. Moreover, many were not able to provide evidence of their Eritrean work experiences due to lack of reference letters.

Eritrean graduates generally have inadequate experience in job recruitment processes. Almost all my participants explained that they were appointed to the institutions where they had been

working in Eritrea, before migrating to the UK. They did not apply and go through standard recruitment processes in Eritrea to get their positions, but were assigned by the government to organisations as it saw fit. They were first assigned to the institutions as part of their national service and later transferred to their permanent staff. Hence, they came to the UK with little (or no) experience of searching and applying for a job. Indeed, many had never done a job interview in Eritrea. However, once in the UK, they had to find, apply and compete for a job. Habtay is one of my participants who left Eritrea after working four years in a higher education institution. He explained how he struggled to get a job in the UK, mainly due to his lack of local work experiences, including job-hunting experiences.

> The lack of [local] work experience had an impact on my life in the UK. I came from a country where the government places graduates in different institutions. We are not used to filling detailed applications and conducting job interviews. I had no job application experience in Eritrea. I was assigned to my institution without doing any job interviews. That was part of my weakness, which I came to realise in the UK. In addition, I did not know how the labour market in the UK works. I also had little experience of the local culture. For example, I did not know the online job-hunting strategies and the job market criteria. Hence, I would say that it was tough for me to find a professional job in the UK, despite my Eritrean qualification and four years' work experience. (Habtay)

Habtay's quotation shows the different job recruitment processes carried out in Eritrea and the UK. He explained that the placements done by the Eritrean government do not prepare individuals for the contemporary online-based job hunting and competitive recruitment processes. The entire cohort of participants agreed with Habtay on this matter. The UK job

searching mechanism is mainly based on the internet where job seekers have to search for vacancies and apply online. The process requires an up-to-date curriculum vitae, cover letter and preparing for interview. It also represents an important instrument through which unemployment can remain an individualised problem (see also Van Oort, 2015).

Nevertheless, as shown above, my participants lacked adequate job searching and application experiences, and this affected their competitiveness for professional jobs. This supports Green's (2006) idea that inadequate knowledge about how the labour market works negatively affects migrants' access to jobs. It further suggests that migrants need to understand the job market, including local job-hunting strategies. Additionally, Senait expressed that the inability to compete in the job market affects the Eritrean migrants' commitment to continuously search for a professional position until they get one. From her perspective, 'Looking for a job in the UK is a fulltime job and it needs commitment'. After trying for a long time, migrants might lose hope of finding a professional position and shift to semi-skilled jobs.

Moreover, my participants struggled to evidence their work experiences. They were not able to easily find referees to endorse their previous work experiences. Regarding this, Yohana emphasised that highly educated Eritrean migrants have many transferable skills such as communication and leadership skills. However, it was difficult to evidence them. She told me:

> I worked as a teacher in an international school in Eritrea. I had diverse knowledge and experiences which could enable me to get a graduate job in the UK. However, I found it hard to get a job in the UK based on these experiences [from Eritrea].

> Nobody was interested to know my previous skills because of the way I came here [as a refugee], and it was hard for me to prove it. So, I did not have anything to support my application. My previous qualification and work experience became almost worthless. Besides, I had no UK qualification and experience. That was a very big challenge.

This captures the hostility of the labour market to refugees and, perhaps, to BAME groups. Yohana's expression indicates that she had been a victim of prejudice, a feeling echoed by many participants of this study. However, neoliberal capitalism often views such qualification-based challenges as individualised problems, rather than large-scale structural inequalities. Accordingly, this pro-market logic further exacerbates existing class and race inequalities (Van Oort, 2015). In addition, Yohana's excerpt highlights the risks of forced migration. As discussed in the previous chapter, most of the migrants in my study were forced to leave their country illegally (without exit-visa) defying the regulations of the government, which made the connection with their previous institutions challenging. In fact, many Eritrean institutions might be afraid to give recommendation letters to such illegal emigrants who are often labelled as 'deserters', by the government (Bozzini, 2015; Laub, 2015). Besides, there are not strong internet and mobile data connection in Eritrea to allow for easy communication and send online recommendation. The country is amongst those with the lowest number of internet users in Africa (Tsegay, 2016).

Besides, Michael, Simret and Yodit noted that Eritrean work experience is not recognised in the UK, even when relevant endorsements could be obtained from previous employers. Michael said:

> To be honest, I did not try to get an endorsement for my Eritrean work experience in order to use it in the UK. It would not work here. So, I did not find it important to bother about a work experience that has insignificant value. It is not only the Eritrean degree which is degraded, but the work experience too. In fact, the work experience was the main challenge as many employers care about relevant work experience. Therefore, the only option was to get additional [local] work experience.

Michael's view is directed towards seeking out local work experience. He argued that there was no means by which he could convince employers that he had a vital experience from Eritrea. As Yohana noted, employers were not interested to know about the migrants' previous skills and experiences. In this sense, many of my participants did not see the value of evidencing their previous work experiences. They realised that it is difficult to get a professional job unless they obtained local experience. Furthermore, my findings indicate that the type of profession and the demographic and technological changes affect the skills and experiences of the migrants and the perception of employers. They also have a major role in the migrants' employment and wages (see Dustmann, Glitz & Frattini, 2008; Somerville & Sumption, 2008). Michael, Simret and Yodit further highlighted that there are cultural and technological differences between Eritrea and the UK. Indeed, the UK has advanced technological equipment and, perhaps, different institutional regulations in various sectors such as health and education. Therefore, it is difficult for highly educated Eritrean migrants such as teachers and nurses to find a professional job in the UK without knowing the local culture, equipment and institutional policies. This does not seem a choice, but a requirement. Hence, most of my participants joined different institutions to get local work experience.

6.2.3 English Language: 'I can speak English'

Language has significant social, cultural and economic values. For instance, Dustmann and Fabbri (2003) stated that lack of English fluency leads to earning losses. In this study, I maintain that language exacerbates socio-economic inequality among and between societies -- the migrants and the host societies in this case. I further show that there is lack of recognition of the linguistic capital held by highly educated Eritrean migrants. Even though English is the medium of instruction in Eritrea, it is their second (or third) language which is mainly used for educational and professional purposes. These factors, therefore, affect socio-cultural and economic integration of the participants of this study.

As discussed in the previous chapter, English language was one of the reasons cited by my participants for migrating to the UK. This is mainly associated with the power of language for integration with the host population. It plays an important role in the transmission of human culture (Gelman & Roberts, 2017). Accordingly, my respondents thought that their language capacity would help them to learn the UK culture and easily integrate into the country. However, the migrants' perception of their English capacity was at odds with what they encountered in the UK. Many noted that they faced language barriers in clearly expressing their ideas. They also had difficulty in fully understanding the British accents in some areas such as Northern England. Explaining the language difficulties, Haben and Semhar expressed:

> I studied in English, but I had difficulty in completely understanding some British accents in the UK. I found it difficult especially in places such as Yorkshire. I believe that they have strong British accent, a bit different from what I used before. It made my life quite unpleasant, even to go to a coffee shop to buy cappuccino. It requires

> courage to ask for what exactly you need and explain how you want it to…because they could ask you to say it again and again. (Haben)

> I can communicate in English, but the British accent in the northern part of England [where I was first resettled] was very difficult to comprehend. It was frustrating to the level that I felt I could not speak English well. However, I started to realise that it was not only me. It was common to most migrants and even to some native English speakers who are not from that particular place. Yet, it was one of the barriers to communicate and integrate with the host people. (Semhar)

Haben and Semhar described that the English dialect spoken in certain parts of the UK and the introvert nature of many Eritreans affected the migrants' social interaction. In particular, the issue of 'requiring courage' to interact or request any service reveals the language and communication barriers and their effect on the life and mentality of the migrants. Similarly, many felt that their English was not as good as they thought, and they had to work on it to improve their chances of getting a job and integrating to the host society. Identifying their limitations was significant for the migrants to improve their capabilities. However, the concern comes when such limitations are associated with fear, frustration or other unpleasant emotions. Such characteristics may be associated with Eritrean culture which, to a large extent, nurtures introverted and shy citizens (see Sterckx, Fessehazion & Teklemariam, 2018), and the stigma of being a refugee (see Stewart, 2005). Nevertheless, this does not mean that the English capacity of the migrants was not significant at all. Indeed, it was important for interacting with local people and learning the new culture. Most of my participants said that they were eventually able to improve their language capacity and understand the different accents.

In addition, my findings suggest that the demand for English fluency is very high in some areas, such as journalism and teaching. The migrants' mastery of the language is also considered insufficient in the job market. This is what Garrido and Codó (2017) described as 'delanguaging'-- ignoring or devaluing the migrants' linguistic capitals. Helen and Ermias, for example, believed that they could not get professional jobs based on their Eritrean qualifications, partly because of their English capacity. Helen was a teacher in Eritrea. She first thought that the Eritrean degree could enable her to get a similar career in the UK. Nevertheless, Helen realised that her English was 'not enough' to compete with native speakers in the job market. She said:

> When I came from Eritrea with a degree, I thought that I would get a job straight away. However, I found that even my language was a barrier to compete for a job. When I was in Eritrea, I thought that I speak fluent English. Here, I knew that I am not a fluent English speaker. Even though I had the technical knowledge, my accent shows that I am not a native speaker of the language. English is my second language. This hinders me from competing in the job market, as many vacancies require excellent or native English speaker.

Similarly, lack of English proficiency pushed Ermias out of his profession. He had studied journalism in Eritrea. However, he works in social care in the UK. Ermias explained:

> You need to be very fluent in English in order to be a journalist in the UK. I did not attempt to get a job in my field [journalism] because I know that I am not competitive

> here. I am not a fluent or native English speaker. So, I diverted my attention to another field and started a new career in health science.

Helen and Ermias complained that their perceived lack of English fluency and their accent have been major obstacles in getting a career that matches their qualifications. Moreover, as can be noticed in the excerpt above, Ermias partly blames his 'outsiderness', noting that some areas such as journalism might require a high level of English fluency. Indeed, it is not rare to see that some vacancies require native English speakers while the position (job description) does not show high needs for English proficiency. This could be one form of structural exclusion which prevents migrants from accessing employment (see Allan & Westwood, 2016). Additionally, Garrido and Codó (2017) stated that devaluing migrants' academic and linguistic capitals is linked to the racialised nature of the labour market. This suggests that not all highly educated Eritrean migrants find employment in their fields of training or interest. Even though they finish another degree in the UK, English remains their second language. Regardless of their capacity, their accent can show that they are not native speakers. Hence, some are either forced to work in semi-skilled and low-skilled occupations or shift to another profession. This deskilling, to some extent, makes migrants feel nostalgic of their previous positions in Eritrea. In such conditions, as stated above, they primarily associate with other co-nationals with similar experiences (Wilson-Forsberg, 2015).

6.2.4 Cultural Differences: 'I respect other cultures'

Cultural identifications are influenced by various factors such as religion, ethnicity and schooling, which shape individuals' identity or self-image and their interaction with different social categories (Akerlof & Kranton, 2000). Identities are not fixed, but they indicate a person's sense of belonging to a particular group (Hall & Du Gay, 1996). As I show in this

section, cultural differences between Eritrea and the UK have a significant impact on the life of my participants.

As mentioned in the previous chapters, the participants of this study possess secular and open worldviews, 'which accept that humans can never have complete and final certainty' (Strenger, 2011: 171). They are aware of the importance of tolerance and mutual respect to live in peace and harmony, particularly in a multicultural society. At the same time, in congruence with Sarangi's (1994) argument, my respondents pointed out that communication across different cultures and social groups is challenging. One main factor for this is cultural differences -- between Eritrea and the UK in this case. It could be argued that miscommunication happens both in speaking and listening because language and culture are closely linked to each other (Wang, 2011). In this context, many interviewees noted that they took a long time to identify and use the commonly used phrases such as 'please' and 'thank you', phrases which have significant cultural importance in the UK. In fact, some of my participants were perceived as rude or disrespectful for asking a service without saying 'please'. Explaining this issue, Marry and Kibrom said:

> It took me time to figure out the important phrases like 'please' and 'thank you'. I especially used to forget saying 'please', until one day a waiter confronted me. I asked for Latte without saying 'please'. Can I have Latte? Then, he said, 'please' staring at my face. Then, I quickly got it and said 'Ohh, please'. I am glad that I made it before he got angry. The miscommunication happened not because one of us was rude; it was cultural difference. It was a big lesson for me. (Marry)

> Even though my English capacity was enough for basic communication, my main challenge here was the culture. The UK has a completely different culture from Eritrea. The way they behave and do things are very different. A simple example is saying 'please' and 'thank you'. They are not commonly used in every service you ask or get in Eritrea. Here, you have to say please and thank you, unless you could be considered as rude and may not be treated well. (Kibrom)

The above statements highlight cultural differences with regard to the importance of 'thank you' and 'please' in Eritrea and the UK. These terms can signal an individual's sense of respect and humility, particularly in the UK. Thus, failure to express 'thank you' or 'please' can lead to disappointment and, perhaps, to wrong perception by the host people about migrants. In contrast, these terms are not commonly used and their effect is limited in Eritrea and many other countries (see Floyd et al., 2018). In most cases, Eritreans are not offended if someone does not say 'thank you' or 'please', for the same reasons that Montesa (2013) stated:

> Friends and family are expected to do things for one another. This means there's no reason for a special comment; it's just assumed you will eventually return the favour later down the road, and that conveys 'thank you' more than actually saying it.

This suggests that it is important to understand that not everyone is used to say 'thank you' because different people have different cultural expressions. While migrants may take considerable time to learn the values and principles of the host country, they cannot swiftly manage the new culture. This also highlights Marry's and Kibrom's comments which indicate that socio-cultural integration involves learning new ideas from the host culture

(Harvey, 2007; Kim, 2001). However, the process of acculturation takes time to identify relevant cultural differences and act accordingly. This may depend on various factors, such as migrants' socio-demographic characteristics, including their length of residence in the host country (Algan, Bisin & Verdier, 2012).

As stated above, the socio-cultural and educational conditions of Eritrea have led many citizens to be introverted or reserved. The teaching-learning process is also mainly based on teacher-centred pedagogy, which limits the interaction between teacher and students, and among students themselves (Freire, 2010). Sterckx, Fessehazion and Teklemariam (2018: 17) stated that 'the Dutch find Eritreans to be introvert and shy by nature, making it difficult to establish contact'. The same could be said about most of my respondents. Some told me that they are not used to speaking about themselves and expressing their qualities, observing that it is socially unacceptable to speak about yourself. It is considered as a sheer and unacceptable expression of individuality, in the Eritrean context, where being embedded in social relationships takes precedence over the individual. This, therefore, affects their social and professional networking. Meron explained this as follows:

> The cultural integration of migrants here depends on the cultural aspect of the specific population. In the Eritrean culture, we usually focus on 'we' instead of 'I'. In our culture, it is considered rude to talk about yourself because our culture is communal. It takes a lot [of time and practice] to change that attitude; to change it from we to I. This even affects us [Eritreans] in a job interview. Employers usually ask Eritrean candidates what they mean by 'we', and that is if they are fortunate. Otherwise, they think that we have not done anything even if we have all the required qualities and

> experiences. They think that we cannot work independently. It is very difficult to adapt to the country's [UK's] situation at the beginning. It takes time.

Meron's excerpt shows first-hand effect of cultural differences on migrants' career opportunities. An Eritrean culture of modesty could be interpreted as lack of experience and self-confidence in the UK, thus, affecting the migrants' job acquisition and social interaction levels. Meron's statement fits with other participants' narratives indicating that many of the Eritrean migrants' took time to come out of their introverted characters.

However, my study further shows that they gradually fit in into the socio-cultural and economic conditions of the UK. As I explain below, my respondents learned new things and developed new cultural identifications through everyday interaction. Their interaction with the new environment and the host population helped them to develop important socio-cultural and psychological adjustments (Wiese, 2010). Hence, they eventually learned culturally appropriate skills and gained access to required services, without totally abolishing their culture of origin (Ward & Kennedy, 1999). They particularly use their native language with Eritreans, cook Eritrean dishes, go to Eritrean community churches, and associate with Eritreans. Yet, they have learned new knowledge, skills and attitudes that could enable them to fit in into the new environment. This suggests that migrants often form new identities to integrate into a new environment (Kim, 2001; Wiese, 2010). It also evidences that cultural identities are always in process and constantly reshaping during integration process (Algan, Bisin & Verdier, 2012).

Thus, most of the Eritrean migrants who participated in my research project came to the UK expecting that their knowledge, skills and experiences would be enough to 'swiftly' integrate

to the country's socio-cultural and economic context. However, they found out that many of the capitals they held in the Eritrean context were neither fully recognised nor sufficient in the UK. Hence, they were required to start afresh to break academic and cultural barriers. They went back to college to study a second bachelor's degree or pursue their graduate study, mainly to obtain a UK qualification and, some, to change their career directions. They also opted to volunteer in some institutions to gain local work experience. The next section presents the strategies that the migrants used to fit in the new context. It also discusses the role of the migrants' educational qualifications in the process.

6.3 The Strategies to Fit In

Research indicates that education plays a significant role in integrating both the migrants and host people (Brădăţan & Kulcsár, 2014; Fokkema & de Haas, 2011; Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007; Torres, 2002). My study adds new insight and information to the nexus between migration and education. I argue that highly educated migrants use different strategies to understand and fill the above-mentioned gaps created due to socio-cultural, academic and other differences between the origin and host countries. Besides, migrants use their educational qualifications to develop their capacity to interact and socialise with the host people and gain access to essential services. Thus, I show that the participants of this study used their educational attainment to learn the new culture, gain new work experience and obtain a UK qualification. In addition, I suggest that social-cultural integration requires strong and relevant support mechanisms.

6.3.1 Learning the New Culture

As I have shown above, the educational qualifications, work experience and language fluency of my interviewees were considered insufficient by many employers, when compared with

those held by the host population. Yet, such qualifications play a vital role in migrants' struggle to fit into a new context. My participants used their education to search for information and learn the socio-cultural conditions of the host country, the UK.

Cultural difference causes multiple challenges (see also Hofstede, 2001). In responding to these, many higher education graduates, including my participants, are equipped with multidimensional skills required to engage in local and global issues (Morais & Ogden, 2011). For instance, Eritrean HEIs, to some extent, equip their students with the skills, attitudes and values to be responsible global citizens (see Tsegay, 2016a). However, these skills, in themselves, are not enough for the migrants to integrate into a new culture. They are rather a means to facilitate and promote the process of integration including social interaction. This suggests that migrants need to make extra efforts to learn the new culture and socialise with the host societies. Many participants of this research explained that they used their educational experience to learn the host country's values, beliefs and even expressions, which are important to interact with the local people. In doing so, the migrants become aware of their own values, principles and biases. They also learned to fit into the new environment and co-exist with the established population. Wolday told me:

> Being able to speak the language and read various materials about the UK enabled me to know the rules and regulations of the country. I was also able to understand the [UK] people's values and perceptions on various issues. These helped me to avoid any negative situations in the country.

This above statement indicates the importance of language in socio-cultural integration. It supports the findings that language helps migrants to learn and cope with the values and

principles of their host countries (BeBe, 2012; de Araujo, 2011; Zhang & Goodson, 2011). Wolday's thought also shows that he used his education to read and understand the host countries' rules and regulations, and this applies to Simret, Yodit and other migrants too. In doing so, they can avoid unwanted misunderstandings such as mistakes made or crimes committed without the knowledge that their conduct was unlawful.

Ermias further stated that 'British people have their own values and cultures; they do have their own merits; hence, I have to know these values in order to respect them, and in return get respected'. Ermias's excerpt highlights two vital points. First, understanding the host culture helps migrants to be culturally sensitive and respect the host values and traditions. Second, respecting the host society could also be responded to with respect, tolerance and, perhaps, cooperation. Indeed, these two points highlight the principles of global citizenship: to respect and value diversity (Oxfam, 2015). They also shed light on the argument that highly skilled immigrants are likely to face less discrimination (Fokkema & de Haas, 2011). This suggests that such migrants might face less discrimination not mainly for the educational qualifications that they hold, but for the values and principles that they exhibit. Of course, this is not to attribute discrimination to migrants' behaviour or overlook the connection between educational qualification and the production of responsible global citizens. It is meant to note that not all graduates are trained to value diversity and social justice, and become responsible global citizens (see Torres, 2002; Tsegay, 2016a). Hence, it is important to recognise the contribution of previous educational qualification as a means of lifelong learning and acquiring new insight for the future. As Ermias noted, 'education is vital to understand why you are here and to know your rights and responsibilities in this country'.

The majority of my participants told me that life was difficult when they first arrived in the UK. As discussed in the previous chapter, the loneliness, exclusion and delays in the decision over their asylum applications were devastating. As they said, in such conditions, it takes confidence and courage to go out and integrate into the new environment. However, it was also a decisive moment to either accept the lonely life or strive to make it better. The interviews I conducted show that most of my participants decided to strive hard in order to make their lives better. As explained above, they started to learn the new culture by reading different materials and volunteering in various institutions. Solomon was one of the participants who took the initiative to explore life in the UK. He said:

> Until I got a decision for my asylum application, I had not received any [integration related] support from the UK government. There was no formal information which says this is the way to integrate, but I took personal initiatives. Instead of sitting idle, I started to search for information and volunteer in an organisation to understand the UK culture and labour conditions.

Solomon's excerpt, which was echoed by many other participants, shows that the asylum application waiting time could be used to the migrants' advantage: to understand the UK's socio-economic and cultural conditions. As already stated, my participants were not allowed to work or travel outside of the UK, before gaining asylum. They were excluded from the workforce regardless of their qualifications or work experiences. They were also not given sufficient guidance about the way of life in Britain. However, Solomon's account suggests that asylum seekers could use their asylum processing time to learn the UK culture and engage in voluntary works, which, to some extent, serve as a base for searching for a job or joining HEIs after receiving their asylum paper. Solomon further noted that he got some

information and technical support from different organisations, such as the Job Centre, Refugee Council and Citizens Advice, when he was granted asylum. Even though these organisations provide various information to those who gained refugee status, the majority of my participants expressed that they were mainly depending on their friends and family members.

Attending church and other social events were also helpful in socialising with the host societies and learning the new environment. Marry, Semhar and Yohana were able to make friends from churches and other social groups. Yohana said, 'Attending a church allowed me to meet many people and learn how to cope with the [UK] system and culture'. Through the same process, many of my participants were able to make friends and meet with people from different cultural backgrounds. Such interaction is a significant means of gaining social capital which provides the participants with two salient advantages (Bourdieu, 1986; Portes, 1998). First, it enables them to gain material and symbolic profits and services from members of their church or other groups. Second, it increases the effectiveness of other capitals which the migrants possess such as economic and cultural capitals. Through social capital, people can get access to economic resources, enhance their cultural capital, and increase their level of affiliation with the host society and institutions (Portes, 1998).

Furthermore, Helen and Haben explained that they were spending a lot of time reading about academic and work conditions of the UK. They stated that their educational qualifications were helpful to identify or understand the things they missed or lacked to successfully integrate to the UK. For example, they realised that they needed to acquire a UK qualification because the Eritrean qualifications they held were deemed less helpful in the UK job market compared with local or other European ones. This indicates that their educational

achievement and English capacity were very important to understand the socio-economic condition of the UK and plan accordingly.

Moreover, my study maintains that cultural identities are learned (Spencer-Oatey, 2012). It further shows that my participants do not assimilate into the host country by embracing every value, norm and principle they encounter. In fact, Meron told me that some of the things he observed in the UK are opposite to his values and principles. He noted, 'It is difficult to embrace and celebrate values and norms which I do not believe in, but I tolerate them'. This is the essence of integration and multiculturalism where people can live alongside each other with peace, respect and solidarity, without losing their cultural identities (Ashcroft & Bevir, 2018; Fokkema & de Haas, 2011). In line with the country's cultural diversity, Britain has a set of values and responsibilities shared by the majority of the people living in the country (Home Office, 2013). The fundamental British values (FBV) of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs are expected to reflect the modern life of the country (Department of Education, 2016; Lander, 2016). Some of these values and responsibilities are not new to the Eritrean migrants, as Eritreans have lived in their country in peace and mutual respect regardless of their differences. In this regard, the International Crisis Group (2010: 17) stated that 'economic lifestyles, cultures, faiths and ethnicities have mostly coexisted peacefully' in Eritrea.

Additionally, the UK has various laws and regulations to uphold the values and principles of the country (O'Cinneide, 2012). Hence, as indicated above, knowing these laws and regulations is significant in adhering to local values and norms. To support this argument, Ermias emphasised that a simple Eritrean greeting could be misunderstood for sexual harassment in the UK.

> Eritrean greetings include shaking hands, hugging and/or kissing on the cheek, which might be considered as types of behaviour that amount to sexual harassment in the UK. So, knowing and understanding British values and norms is not only about cultural sensitivity, it is also about protecting yourself from unintended offences.

Like Wolday, Ermias suggested that migrants need to avoid any misunderstanding or offence caused by cultural differences. Here, it is clear that these issues are deeper than understanding the FBV. In this context, Meron's and Ermias's perspectives suggest that migrants should be aware of the values as well as the laws and regulations of the host country. However, as stated above, this does not mean that they must apply whatever they learn. At the same time, neither does it mean that they should condemn whatever they do not agree with. They can select and apply things that they feel are important and in line with the rules and regulations of the country. They also need to respect or tolerate other people's values, norms and attitudes, unless they are harmful or illegal. In addition, considering the delicate nature of some issues such as 'consent', Ermias' statement above indicates that the consequences of cultural confusion could be tragic, leading to unintended offences. These and other related conditions shaped the values and attitudes of my participants, confirming that cultural identities are fluid and open to external influences. This further deepens the statement of Vieira and Trindade (2008): culture is not static.

To conclude, my participants used their educational achievement to equip themselves with additional information required to understand the cultural differences they find between their lives in the origin and host countries. The next section discusses my respondents' acquisition of local work experience and culture.

6.3.2 Local Work Experience and Culture

According to Alvesson (2012), work culture encompasses shared values, beliefs, thoughts and attitudes of employees. It also deals with the ideologies, principles, as well as the decision and communication process of the organisation (Alvesson, 2012). As discussed earlier, my informants served in different institutions in Eritrea, including in high-level positions. However, most of them lacked international experience because they had never travelled abroad and worked outside the country's institutions, before their time of emigration. This indicates that they had no or little experience concerning other countries' work culture, which is usually connected to the overall national culture and regulations of the countries. Therefore, to address this, my participants engaged in a voluntary work based on their Eritrean qualifications and, thus, were able to gain local work experience and understand the work culture. This finding supplements research that shows a connection between culture and organisational practices (see Hofstede, 1991; 2011; Treven, Mulej & Lynn, 2008). My study further reveals that working or being in employment contributes to learning the new culture.

My interviewees explained that they used their educational qualifications to gain additional skills and experiences, and this facilitated their integration to the host country. For example, Habtay started to volunteer in one organisation soon after he arrived in the UK. He described his experience as 'culturally and professionally important'. He said, 'I was able to learn that people are very careful in their work culture, including the respect they have for time and appointments [which are not very strict in Eritrea]'. Habtay learned that he cannot miss or even be late when attending appointments. Moreover, the experience of volunteering provided many participants with the opportunity to blend their theoretical and practical

knowledge about the UK working environment, society and culture. They found volunteering quite important to understand the organisational practices including those associated with culture, echoing the argument of Treven, Mulej and Lynn (2008). Furthermore, the volunteering experience gave them an insight into the UK labour market. Michael and Meron told me that the volunteering work helped them to assess their capacity in relation to the UK job market and make an informed decision accordingly.

> I did a volunteering work and it allowed me to assess and find out what the current job situation looks like. It also helped me to rethink my strategies in finding a job in the UK. I was able to reflect on whether I should plan for one permanent job or work in different organisations. The experience was both challenging and interesting. (Michael)

> First, it was hard to accept doing voluntary work to gain new experience. It was a big challenge to start anew. However, once I overcame this challenge and started volunteering, I used it as a means of showing my skills and getting accepted for that. The volunteering work was a good platform to show my abilities that I can do and perform various tasks. It was also an opportunity to assess myself and identify my transferable skills. (Meron)

Meron's testimony suggests that some migrants find it difficult to ignore their previous work experiences and start to volunteer looking for a new one. Few participants also felt that they were being exploited through unpaid work for the sake of getting a reference letter. However, as can be seen in the excerpts above, the majority of my participants noted that their voluntary work was a worthwhile endeavour from a career perspective. It exposed them to

the UK working environment. In doing so, they were able to gain two advantages. First, voluntary work was vital in building the migrants' capacity while helping society. Second, it helped them to assess their capacity and explore areas for improvement in order to be competitive in the UK job market. Overall, during their voluntary work, most of my participants found themselves competent to carry out the duties and responsibilities assigned to them. They also managed to cope with their organisations' culture and working conditions. In general, volunteering was significant in advancing the participants' knowledge, skills and attitudes to integrate into the local work culture. They also learned new skills and narrowed the gaps created by cultural differences between Eritrea and the UK.

In addition, through volunteering, the Eritrean migrants were able to join social and professional networks with people from different socio-cultural backgrounds. These interactions and networks widened their knowledge, skills and experiences about the UK. The following testimonies evidence the role of educational qualification and English capacity in securing voluntary work and widening their social circles in the UK.

> My educational qualification from Eritrea was significant in getting volunteering work. This, along with my English language capacity, helped me to understand the system, values and norms of the country [UK]. I was also able to communicate with people from diverse socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds and make friends. These gave me essential information to plan and decide about my future activities, including my education and job, in the UK. (Wolday)

> I started volunteering work as administrative assistant and interpreter aiming to use my education to help other refugees. However, my volunteering work was mutually

> beneficial, including to me. In my volunteering experience, I indulged myself in the UK work environment, made professional connections, and explored different [work-related] options and opportunities. I also got an opportunity to communicate with many UK citizens and people from other countries, and that opened my eyes. My educational attainment and the advantage of speaking English were vital in the process. (Solomon)

These quotations further elaborate on the contribution of voluntary work to society and my participants. In this context, volunteering could be helpful to the host society. Solomon saw volunteering as giving and receiving. He contributed to the UK by helping other refugees while learning the country's work environment and culture. In fact, Solomon and few others continued helping refugees, after finishing their voluntary work. The experiences that they accumulated made them key members of the local community in supporting Eritrean and other refugees. In addition, the above testimonies show that volunteering enabled migrants to join social and professional networks. Many participants told me that they used their volunteering experience to find a job in similar institutions, mostly after getting a UK qualification. For instance, Wolday used his voluntary work to explore a career he could pursue, and the qualifications required for it. This adds new insight into the statement that education is vital in shaping the experience and life course of migrants (Brădăţan & Kulcsár, 2014; Fokkema & de Haas, 2011). It plays an important role in brightening the life and future of migrants through getting local work experience.

6.3.3 Back to College

In this part, I show that most of my participants returned to college to upgrade their educational qualifications and compete in the UK job market. Moreover, I found that

returning to college had additional purpose: to meet and interact with students from diverse socio-cultural communities. Nevertheless, those, who became students, had to manage the social and pedagogical conditions of UK HEIs.

Some went to universities in the UK intending to change their career direction, whereas others thought that they might be good places to learn the host culture and develop a sense of belonging with the local people. Neguse completed another bachelor's degree in the UK, in a different specialisation from the one he did in Eritrea. He returned to college to acquire a UK qualification. He also used the opportunity to study a programme of his interest, instead of repeating the same qualification that he had reluctantly studied at the University of Asmara. Due to intense competition, students like Neguse had not been able to join a programme of their choice at the University of Asmara.

> I decided to go to college and get another degree in the UK. It was important to study a programme of my choice and upgrade my qualification to the UK level. That could give me a better opportunity to compete for a job. Moreover, it is an advantage to interact with students from different cultural backgrounds and experiences. It provides an opportunity to know the UK culture, and beyond. (Neguse)

Neguse's thoughts echoed those of many other participants. Going to college was significant for filling the gaps identified during their volunteering work. In addition to cultural differences, there are technological and educational variations between Eritrea and the UK. As mentioned above, there is a huge technological difference between the two countries in the health sector. Moreover, the structure, curriculum content and delivery methods are not similar in the education sector. For instance, a law graduate from Eritrea needs to understand

the UK legal system in order to integrate to the UK job market. This suggests that the curriculum difference affects the value of the demoted Eritrean qualification and compels the migrants to return to college or attend professional development courses. This, of course, does not mean that the Eritrean degree is wasted. It, rather, helped the migrants achieve their dreams: get the capitals they need to integrate into the new context. In doing so, my participants were able to transfer their academic capital to economic and other forms of capitals. However, they were usually required to incur significant labour in terms of time, cost and other expenditures to transform their educational capital (Bourdieu, 1986).

In this study, I have shown that Eritrean qualifications are used as a base for further development. They are significant for gaining access to UK universities and improving the future of the migrants. In line with this, Wolday pointed out, 'My life would have been very difficult without my educational qualification, and it would have been hard to see the person that you see now'. In addition, Fanus concurred that her life would have been difficult and different. She joined a UK university and took volunteering work to get a UK qualification and understand the culture. Accordingly, she was able to get a glimpse of British life and be aware of the 'Dos' and 'Don'ts'. Like many other participants, Fanus told me that her Eritrean qualification enabled her to join the university without attending any English courses or taking the English exam required by UK institutions. As much as she gave credit to her educational qualification, Fanus also did the same to the volunteering role, friends and members of her family that helped her to devise ways to integrate into the socio-cultural and economic life of the UK.

Similarly, many other participants of this study discussed the technical, financial and moral support they received from different stakeholders including the UK government, NGOs and

family and friends. Even though the level of supports was inadequate, they helped the migrants to re-qualify and, to some extent, integrate to the UK. As Ermias said, 'The beginning was uphill, and the process was not smooth'. This suggests that the journey requires coordinated efforts, from various stakeholders including local organisations and people, in equipping migrants with the necessary information and guidance.

My findings reveal that socio-cultural integration is a demanding and complicated process. As shown above, migrants often face a variety of challenges. Hence, they join a university to get a local qualification and socialise with other people. However, I found that different factors such as culture, age and pedagogical practices greatly affect my participants' social life and academic progress. Culture affects how individuals write, speak and behave (Gay, 2010). As I noted above, Eritreans are generally introverted and shy people. These traits were not only prevalent in my participants' testimonies but were also cited as barriers to the migrants' social interaction (see also Sterckx, Fessehazion & Teklemariam, 2018). It took them a long time to establish friendships with people from the host population. They often feel at ease being close to each other or to other people, particularly migrants, who share similar conditions with them. This affects their communication and socialising patterns. Yohana indicated that many other students perceived their shyness as a lack of self-confidence and knowledge. Nonetheless, the Eritreans migrants (students) gradually understood the situation and acted upon it. They showed steady progress which indicated that they could do more. From Yodit's and Semhar's perspectives, they were in a better position than many other students perceived them. As such, the before migration educational qualification and experience played a great role in their educational achievement in the UK.

In addition, Neguse's and Semhar's statements below show that they were older than most of the undergraduate UK students in their classes. There was an average of six or more years age difference between them. This was a common phenomenon for my participants who went to college to re-qualify. For instance, the Higher Education Statistics Agency (2019) indicated that 86 percent of the 2017/18 first year fulltime undergraduate students in the UK were within the age group of twenty and under. The majority of my participants explained that the age difference further affected the social interaction between the two groups. It became difficult to find a common interest outside academia and easily socialise with the younger students. For many, this was also exacerbated by cultural factors. The following excerpts evidence some of the challenges that they faced in college.

> The [UK] students were too young compared to my age. They just came from high school. They were young, mostly seventeen or eighteen years old; and I was around 25 when I joined the university. To be honest, it was a struggle. But slowly you start to understand them, and they do the same. You explain to them where you came from, what your background is. You start to chat and tell them about yourself. Slowly, they start to know your ability and that you can do more. Then, they get surprised about your capacity and start to appreciate you as a person and the differences you have with them. At the same time, you understand them and the (cultural) differences in between. (Semhar)

> The education system here [in the UK] and back home are different. The teaching style in this country is student-centred and puts great emphasis on independent learning. However, our Eritrean experience was more of teacher-centred. Another issue is related to technology and other teaching-learning facilities, which were very

> scarce in Eritrea. For example, I had low computer skills and could not type well, which are important skills in the UK. Hence, when you come here, everything becomes new to you. In addition to cultural barriers, the age difference with the UK students also makes integration challenging and time-consuming. (Neguse)

Here, Neguse captures another significant challenge related to pedagogy. This is an idea shared by Yohana, Simret and many other participants. They found the 'student-centred' pedagogical practices challenging for two reasons. First, this approach requires students to be proactive and take responsibility for their learning (Freire, 2010; Hooks, 2010). However, the Eritrean migrants had little or no experience of independent learning. The Eritrean experience, in most cases, is based on a vertical relationship in which students are afraid of teachers, rather than respecting and at the same time academically challenging them through questions and comments. This then negatively affected the migrants' academic life in the UK. Yohana explained that she was hesitant even to approach her teachers and ask for help. She struggled alone to write her assignments and meet the deadlines until she learned how the system works and managed to cope with it.

Second, many of the examples discussed in class were not familiar to them. Many participants stated that it was not a language problem. They were able to listen to the entire class discussion, but they had a problem in understanding the content. In particular, the examples used and topics selected for discussion were not familiar. As Senait elaborated, it was more of a cultural issue.

> Our culture is different and sometimes I was not able to understand the [UK] jokes and examples shared in class. I could not understand what they [the teacher and

> students] were saying. Of course, they were speaking in English, and I could listen to it. Yet, it was hard to comprehend the meaning. It was then really hard to express myself. I could not participate in the discussion. For the first year, it was hard [for me] to fit into the class. (Senait)

Senait's account shows the impact of the local context or culture on the teaching and learning process. In fact, this is what often happens to many international students, including myself. I remember getting confused in a class when a professor asked about the 'X factor' of our PhD thesis. After a reply from two students, I understood that she meant the 'main contribution' of our thesis. Therefore, it is not difficult to imagine Senait's puzzlement while everyone is discussing a certain topic or laughing about a joke. Many other participants echoed her thoughts. They pointed out that many of the examples discussed in class were based on ongoing UK or European events. Others were connected to television programmes, which the migrants had no access to. The examples or jokes might be familiar to the local students, but they were new and confusing for the Eritrean migrants.

Nevertheless, through time, they came to understand the teaching-learning process and used their prior educational and work experiences to gain a place among their peers. This is important because, as Bourdieu (1986) noted, academic capital is not completely independent; it is affected by social and cultural capitals. This suggests that the academic experience of migrants is influenced by various factors such as their level of social networking and cultural integration within the host country. Therefore, limited social interaction causes low social networking and shallow understanding of the host culture which in turn affects the socio-cultural integration of the migrants as well as their academic

experiences (Tsegay, Zegergish & Ashraf, 2018). This means that migrants need to work on social and cultural capitals to advance their academic capital.

6.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have shown that these Eritrean migrants interviewed came to the UK with high expectations. They believed that their prior qualifications and experiences would enable them to easily integrate into the social and economic context of the country. However, they found that many of their expectations were not realistic. Hence, they were required to start afresh to break the academic and qualification barriers. They opted to volunteer in different institutions to gain local work experience, understand the labour market and learn the new culture. They also went back to college to pursue their study aiming to develop their career prospects.

My study shows that the Eritrean migrants who participated in this research faced various challenges in the host country, which slowed down their socio-cultural integration process. Cultural differences and deskilling were two major challenges that most of my respondents faced in the UK. On one hand, cultural differences between the UK and Eritrea hindered their swift socio-cultural, economic and academic integration. This suggests that migrants need to understand the host culture to successfully carry out social, academic and other activities. On the other hand, the devaluation of the Eritrean bachelor's degree to advanced diploma had a negative impact on finding a professional job. Overall, they were exposed to social declassing (Bourdieu, 1984; Hansen & Zechner, 2017), which frustrated many of my participants and led some to became nostalgic of the relatively privileged position they enjoyed in Eritrea (Wilson-Forsberg, 2015). In fact, some argued that deskilling is part of the UK's structural racism, targeted to hinder immigrants from taking a professional job. This substantiates the

evidence that BAME applicants have been victims of racial discrimination in recruitment practices in Britain (see Bosanquet & Doeringer, 1973; Wood et al., 2009). The situation could be worse for migrants who usually lack important documents to evidence their academic qualifications and work experiences.

Moreover, my findings indicate that, despite various challenges, my participants hold secular and open worldviews, significant capitals to embrace cultural differences with the host people (Torres, 2002). They also used their educational attainment to gain additional knowledge, skills and experiences in order to integrate to the host country. One simple example is that they used their English capacity to communicate with the local people and understand their values and norms. This adds new knowledge and insight into the statement that language acquisition has a key influence on the socio-cultural integration of migrants (BeBe, 2012; de Araujo, 2011). It helps migrants nurture additional experiences and multiple (multicultural) identifications to deal with cultural differences they find between their origin and host countries. In addition, my findings evidence the conversion of academic capital to social and cultural capitals, and vice versa, although this conversion was often a complex and fraught process (Bourdieu, 1986).

Finally, in this chapter, I have shown that cultural identities are fluid, dynamic and affected by socio-economic and political factors. A change in law and regulation can affect cultural change, and vice-versa. Hence, migrants should know the laws and regulations of their host country to cope with any cultural change that may occur. At the same time, they should also be aware of any cultural change to comply with any legal amendments or change. Of course, this does not mean that migrants must accept any change imposed on them. They have the right to challenge any injustice, discrimination and oppression legally.

CHAPTER SEVEN

MIGRATION, FAMILY FORMATION AND GENDER RELATIONS

> The patriarchy treats social power and wealth like a pie, with only so many slices to give out. The more people seated at the table means the less power for everyone. But what if we started treating social power like a flywheel, where the more people contribute to the system, the more power we generate together? (Lauren Schiller, 2018).

7.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I discussed the expectations, challenges and strategies of highly educated Eritrean migrants in the UK. I described the way they shape their values and attitudes to fit into the new environment and build a new life. I showed that educational qualifications, to some extent, provide migrants with social and economic opportunities. Yet, they must learn about the new culture and upgrade their educational qualifications to achieve a better outcome in terms of social interaction and employment. This chapter deals with the nexus between gender and family relations, an issue which has attracted limited interest in the context of the migration process (Choi, 2019; Jang, Casterline & Snyder, 2014). In particular, I discuss the effect of family and gender relations to migrants' social and cultural conditions in their destination country, the UK in this case.

My study reveals that migration, family and gender relations are closely related. Migration affects family formation and relationships, while family formation and relationships influence socio-cultural integration of migrants into their host country. First, I explore the complexities of family reunion and, then, discuss the issues of marriage, child-rearing and gender roles. I

reveal that Eritrean patriarchal society has a significant impact on marriage and family life of the migrants. Similar claims could also be made concerning gender roles and family relations. Despite their socio-economic empowerment, women migrants are more likely to take a primary role in housework and raising children.

7.2 Family Reunion

As discussed in Chapter Five, socio-economic and political factors caused my participants to flee their country or change their status to that of 'vagabonds' (Bauman, 1996). Most of them left Eritrea illegally and made a risky and long journey to reach the UK. The situation was neither suitable nor safe to take their family with them. In fact, none of the participants in this research travelled together with their partner or child to the UK. They found themselves separated from their families in the early stage of migration, a time when they needed moral support the most. The study further shows that, in most cases, it took them a long time to reunite with their family in the UK. Eritrean and UK immigration policies were among the main factors contributing to the delayed family reunion.

Meron, Wolday and Simon, for example, left their families back home. Meron could not bring his family with him because he first left Eritrea for a conference and then stayed in the UK fearing unwarranted imprisonment upon his return to the country. Similarly, Wolday's family did not accompany him when he migrated to the UK due to the 'authoritarian political atmosphere' in Eritrea. Above all, as Simon pointed out, 'It is not easy to travel on long, expensive and risky routes with family, especially children'. My participants hoped that their families would join them as soon as they reached their destination and received their asylum paper. However, as shown in Chapter Five, the asylum application is a lengthy and complicated process. This, therefore, delayed Wolday's and Simon's family reunion. It also

exacerbated the nostalgia and anxiety that they had been experiencing due to cultural shock and exclusion.

> It is not easy to be separated from your family, without knowing when you will meet again. I was living in a country [Eritrea] with a different culture. I almost lost everything I had, including my family, to get here. On top of that, I had to wait for about eight months to get my asylum paper. With the delay of my asylum application decision, my frustration increased. I was not quite sure when my family would join me. It was another headache, additional stress. It affected me mentally and psychologically. (Wolday)

> It took me more than two years to get my refugee status. I was not sure what to do and how to explain this to my family…because they were expecting to join me [in the UK] shortly. After assessing the situation, I noticed that it might take a long time to get my paper. So, I decided to look for other options to facilitate my family reunion. I found someone who could claim for [and bring] my family as his own. Of course, it is not easy to convince anyone to do such thing. I also had to work illegally to help my family [economically]. (Simon)

The above testimonies show that these Eritrean migrants had no idea when they would meet their family again. As can be seen, the accounts further suggest that asylum application decisions by the Home Office affect family reunion and the psychological stability of migrants. UK immigration policy causes the separation of refugees from their families for long periods, and sometimes indefinitely. Late asylum application decisions lead to delayed family reunion, while rejection could end any hope of family reunification. In addition, the

Home Office's decision affects the economic condition of migrants and their family back in Eritrea. As indicated above, despite high economic expectation from families, migrants are not allowed to work before getting their refugee status. As noted in Chapter Two, they receive an asylum seeker's allowance of about £37 a week (Home Office, 1998, 1999, 2014), which is barely enough to live on. As the allowance money is not substantial, my participants either depended on other family members or worked illegally to support their family.

Wolday's account shows the demotivation, frustration and depression linked to the separation from his family. Several other interviewees also reported similar feelings. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that the separation of families led to mental health problems among the migrants. These points are important because they affect the migrants' ability to integrate into their host country (Beaton et al., 2018). Simon recounted that many families in Eritrea have inadequate knowledge about the asylum process in the UK. They assume that reaching the UK would automatically grant migrants better economic opportunities. Hence, they expect high remittances, which could enable them to live a lavish lifestyle in Eritrea. Moreover, the expectation of families for quick 'family reunion' exerts additional pressure on the migrants. My participants reported that pressure from their family increased when newly arrived migrants get their asylum decision and reunite with their family ahead of them. These factors caused migrants like Simon to work illegally and look for alternative ways of family reunion.

Migrants can apply for family reunion in the UK after they are granted refugee status or humanitarian protection. The UK family reunion provision allows adult refugees to apply for their 'spouse or partner and children under the age of 18, who formed part of the family unit before their sponsor fled their country' (Home Office, 2016b: 4). However, my findings indicate that the Eritrean migrants faced many challenges to reunite with family, even after

getting their refugee status. The Eritrean government's emigration restriction is a major challenge which hinders family reunion. The government requires that its citizens obtain an exit visa to travel to other countries. However, exit visas are not freely granted to anyone, especially to individuals from the age of five to 50. In its report on Eritrea's human rights practices, the USDS explained the exit visa restrictions in Eritrea as follows:

> Categories of persons most commonly denied exit visas included men under age 54, regardless of whether they had completed the military portion of national service, and women younger than 30, unless they had children. The government did not generally grant exit permits to members of the citizen militia, although some whom authorities demobilised from national service or who had permission from their zone commanders were able to obtain them (USDS, 2017: 14).

As many participants noted, the aforementioned age limit is not equally applicable to all women. The same is true for children. The Eritrean government usually restricts women and children who are not eligible for national service. This is a common phenomenon for partners and children of those who left the country illegally or over-stayed abroad without the government's approval. Meron argued that this is a politically motivated move, mainly planned to punish and control the so-called 'deserters'.

> The condition becomes series, especially for wives and children of those who left the country or extended their time abroad without the permission of the government. It is a way to punish us [the emigrants] who are labelled as 'deserters'. Therefore, we are forced to look for other ways to take our family out of the country. (Meron)

Meron seemed emotional and at the same time surprised. Then he said, ‘This is not fair’. His emotion and excerpt highlight the fact that the Eritrean government deprives men, women and children of the right to travel abroad. This is not mainly due to national service issues or other national obligations, but because their partners/parents did not comply with the exit regulation of the government. Meron further noted the government officials’ use of the term ‘deserters’, to portray those who leave the country or overstayed abroad without its permission. In most cases, the migrants are labelled as ‘deserters or draft evaders’ for abandoning the prolonged national service (Bozzini, 2011; Kibreab, 2009, 2013). It is a means to demotivate and halt others from leaving.

However, the forced immobility of Eritreans is not beneficial for the country and the people, especially in the modern globalised world. Indeed, it is not working as people are still leaving the country regardless of the challenges and consequences. Moreover, forced immobility is contrary to Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states that ‘everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country’ (UN, 1948: 74). Above all, it lacks rational and moral justifications to hold someone a captive because of their partners or parents. What if the migrants do not care about their partners or children left at home? What would be the condition/future of those who are left at home, and how would it affect the country? These questions need further consideration. Yet, I believe that the impact would have been negative to the partners or children left at home, and the country at large.

Considering the aforementioned forced immobility, many Eritrean migrants smuggle their family out of the country. Similarly, all of my participants who had a family back home smuggled their partners and children through the dangerous Eritrea-Ethiopia or Eritrea-Sudan

border. They paid about US$2000 per person, which is a huge amount for migrants who had been waiting for their asylum paper without any substantial income. Thus, most had to work hard (often at two jobs) to save such an amount of money in a short period, while remitting some money for the family expenses. Explaining the risk, Simon stated:

> My wife and children had to travel through the highly militarised border to enter Sudan. The amount of money paid to the smugglers is very high, especially if you have young children. The risk is greater too. They could die crossing the border or could fall at the hands of human traffickers. If caught [by Eritrean government forces], their lives could be in danger. They are usually taken to military detention centres, not police stations.

Here, it is not hard to understand Simon's frustration and worries, and the glaring risk his family and especially children were exposed to. Many other participants echoed Simon's account, confirming the presence of restricted mobility in Eritrea. In addition, they elaborated the effect of restriction of movement, which has compelled many people to choose illegal and dangerous routes. This shows that the risky and expensive journey of my participants, to some extent, applies to their families.

Furthermore, Simon's testimony substantiates the findings which indicate the absence of the rule of law in the country (Reid, 2009; UN, 2015). People are kept in military detention centres without due process. In this context, Berhane added that illegal emigration has repercussions for family members remaining in the country. He explained that failure to successfully smuggle your partner and children from Eritrea could jeopardise anyone in your family being left behind. Berhane said that 'a member of my family was imprisoned for about

six months and paid a lot of money on suspicion of helping my wife to illegally leave the country'. This corroborates both Amnesty International's and Arapiles's reports. Amnesty International (2013: 6) stated that 'family members have been arrested in place of individuals who have fled the country'. Arapiles (2015: 19) also reported that families of draft evaders and deserters are 'targeted to pay high fines of 50,000 Nafka [equivalent to £2500] for each family member who has left the country'.

As stated above, the majority of Eritreans, including my participants, value family relations (Cooper & Underwood, 2010; Indira & Vijayalakshmi, 2015). Nevertheless, the UK's family reunion provision does not permit extended families including parents or siblings to join migrant families, even if they are dependent on family members who are legally settled in the UK (Home Office, 2016b). This holds back many Eritrean migrants from focusing their energy in their host country. They usually support their extended families, particularly their parents and siblings, financially (Al-Ali, Black & Koser, 2001). Some also travel to Eritrea or a neighbouring country to meet them. The evidence gathered for my study shows that this is a loophole which the Eritrean government exploits. The government knows that those who leave the country send money to their family, which increases financial flows into the country. It also understands that Eritrean migrants have close connections with their country and family. Therefore, the government set the diaspora tax -- 2 percent income tax for Eritreans living abroad (Hirt, 2014). Eritreans migrants have to pay the diaspora tax in order to obtain consular services abroad and social services within the country. In fact, remittance and diaspora tax are the main sources of income to many families and the government in Eritrea, respectively (Healy, 2007; Kirk, 2010; Laub, 2015).

Moreover, those who left the country illegally or overstayed abroad without approval are required to sign a 'regret form' at the Eritrean embassy. The form states that the migrants' decision to leave the country or overstay abroad without prior permission of the government is illegal and punishable by law. This form constitutes authoritarianism and blames all the problems including the causes and means of migration on the migrants rather than the socio-economic and political system in Eritrea. Yet, some participants like Kibrom and Marry signed the regret form to go to Eritrea and meet their families. Ermias also celebrated his wedding with his family in Eritrea through the same approach. However, my findings suggest that not all the Eritrean migrants who paid the diaspora tax and signed the regret form are in favour of the country's political system. Many fulfil these requirements to gain necessary consular services or visit Eritrea for holidays, family visits and other purposes without a problem. The following testimonies explain the value my participants give to family relations and the sacrifice they make to see their family.

> I visited Eritrea for my wedding last year. I was planning to marry. My wife is an Eritrean too. We thought that our wedding day would not be enjoyable without our family and relatives. My parents, some of my siblings and other relatives are all in Eritrea. I had to do whatever was necessary to be able to visit Eritrea and celebrate with my family. (Ermias)

> I feel there is an Eritrean identity deep inside me. I miss home, mainly my family, the country, and friends. I have my family still living in Eritrea. My mom, dad, brothers and sisters. It had been a while since I saw them. Hence, before two years, I visited Eritrea to see my family. Of course, I have to pay the diaspora tax and fill the regret form to do that [visit Eritrea]. (Kibrom)

> I now have made many changes from the time I came here eight years ago. I am more liberal and open to new things and ideas. I understand British culture more and better now. But I miss my family. There is no way of reconciling the nostalgia I have to my home. Hence, I visited Eritrea two times to see my family and friends. (Marry)

The above accounts show the advancing integration of the participants in the UK and their continuing connection to the country of origin, Eritrea. Ermias's and Kibrom's excerpts mainly focus on why they had to pay the diaspora tax and sign the regret form. However, Marry's testimony further shows her cultural transformation and integration into the social structures of the UK. However, although Marry managed to learn the British culture, including the FBV, and cope with the country's way of life, she could not bear the homesickness and nostalgia for her family. As her family and friends could not come to the UK due to visa issues, the alternative she saw was to visit them in Eritrea. Overall, the data collected for this study show that many of the participants in this study have made significant progress in integrating into the UK culture and lifestyle. Most of them eventually got a new job and started a new life. However, the migrants' integration to the UK has not changed their feeling for Eritrea and the connection with their families. Neguse tried to justify this by saying, 'Eritrea is my origin and my nation where I came from and the people are my blood'. However, this is a question that I have heard many naturalised Eritrean migrants ask themselves: why do I worry much about Eritrea when I have a better life in my host country? I suggest that a deeper study is needed to broaden readers' understanding of this issue.

As Ermias indicated, Eritrean migrants still apply Eritrean customs and traditions in different social events such as wedding and baptism ceremonies, which often require a social gathering

of family and friends. Indeed, this exacerbates the migrants' nostalgia and love of their country of origin. For instance, Kibrom has met some of his socio-economic objectives in the UK. He has a stable job, friends and a family with two children, but he still misses Eritrea and his family members and friends living in the country. As can be seen in the excerpts above, Ermias and Marry also have similar feelings towards their families and country of origin. Hence, they appealed to the government which they criticise for its human rights violations. They paid the diaspora tax and signed the regret form to visit the country and meet their family. Overall, my participants' experiences suggest that they have been embracing cultural diversity and acquiring appropriate skills without losing their identifications with Eritrea (Fokkema & de Haas, 2011; Ward & Kennedy, 1999). However, most of them noted that they did not pay the diaspora tax in order to contribute to the developmental projects of the country and stimulate the national economy, which is the main objective of the Eritrean tax laws (Hirt, 2014). This perhaps could emanate from their concern on the governments' lack of accountability and transparency (see Desta, 2019).

My findings further show that many do not want to sign the regret form. Besides, not all of those who fulfil the requirements can visit Eritrea to see their family, especially if they have been critics of the Eritrean government (Home Office, 2018). The Eritrean diaspora includes both supporters and opponents of the government (Hirt, 2014). Those who oppose the government mostly meet their relatives in a neighbouring country or face lifetime separation. For instance, Wolday and Weini are critical of the human rights and political situation in Eritrea. As a result, they are afraid of visiting Eritrea although they have acquired British citizenship. It is also difficult to bring their siblings or parents to the UK due to the restrictive immigration policy for applicants mainly from Africa (BBC, 2012; Kelland, 2018). Hence, Wolday and Weini had to invite their parents to a neighbouring country, and travel there to

meet them. In most cases, my participants covered the travelling and accommodation costs for all of them.

7.3 Marriage

As discussed above, after receiving asylum, most married migrants strive for family reunion. My study also shows that single migrants look for a 'suitable partner' in Eritrea and the UK to form a family. It is worth noting that there might not be unique characteristics for a suitable person because the needs and interests of people differ. Generally, my informants associate suitability with a partner who can fulfil their socio-cultural, economic and/or academic expectations. However, as shown below, factors such as family interference, lack of networking and the relatively small size of Eritrean community in the UK affect the process of partner selection. Furthermore, the interviews conducted for this study indicate that arranged marriages allow men to choose a partner and get married with the help of family members or friends.

Many participants shared feelings of loneliness despite learning the local culture and getting jobs. The bond they have with family members and friends in the UK is often weak mainly due to distance and work responsibilities. They stated that one way to tackle loneliness is to find a suitable partner and get married. For instance, Neguse and Marry pointed out:

> After obtaining my asylum paper, I got a UK qualification and, then, found a job. Yet, I was not satisfied. I was feeling lonely. Going to a lonely and cold house makes life dull. So, I had to find a partner to form a family and ease my loneliness. Of course, my partner should be an Eritrean or Eritrean origin in order to keep the bond with my

> country of origin and family. It all worked out as planned. Here I am now with my wife and children. (Neguse)

> I now understand the living style in the UK, and I could say that I have come a long way. But I still feel lonely. It [my loneliness] has been a constant challenge. It is true that I do have some friends. However, it is hard to rely on or share your deep feelings with them, as the bond is not very strong. The support I was getting [in Eritrea] from family and friends are not here. There is a huge gap left.… a gap which could be filled with someone always beside me. (Marry)

Neguse's and Marry's testimonies show the presence of loneliness among the migrants. One reason for this is the separation of the migrants from their families and other loved ones. As Marry stated, they also lack friends with whom to share their difficulties and inner emotions. In most cases, my participants compared their UK lifestyle with the Eritrean one where social life is dominant over the individual. People in Eritrea often have plenty of interactions with friends, family and neighbours, which the migrants miss in the UK. This could be due to their busy schedule of events, the individualistic nature of the UK[13]and the distribution of Eritreans across different cities and towns.

The above excerpts further indicate that the highly educated Eritrean migrants see marriage as a way out of loneliness and nostalgia, and a means to maintain the Eritrean identity. As such, Neguse identified that the suitable partner should at least have Eritrean origin. As explained below, such partnership strengthens migrants' connection to their country of origin. Besides, marriage in Eritrea is an important stage of life and the 'proper' way to build a

[13] Britain is found to be the most individualistic country in the European Union (Stone, 2017).

family. It also provides economic advantage by sharing household expenses and tasks (Ribar, 2004; Waite, 1995). My participants, nonetheless, were keen on the social aspects of married life, hoping that they would be able to get a partner/family to socialise with and share their burdens. They revealed that marriage extends social interaction and the network of family and friends. Having a suitable partner and hoping for children to follow, they believe that loneliness would evaporate and they could finally feel at home away from home. This is the main reason why some of my participants are still looking for what they call a 'suitable partner'. They are afraid that they might end up with the wrong person or face any instances of marital disruptions or divorce.

Moreover, my findings reveal that not all highly educated migrants marry a partner with a university degree. All my participants stressed the importance of higher education qualifications for socio-economic development and family life. Nevertheless, all but one of my male participants are married to women without a university degree. In comparison, most of the married women I interviewed are wed to men with a university degree. Neguse and Solomon explained that some of their reasons for marrying non-graduates include marriage because of love, and the lack of enough Eritrean women graduates in the UK. Moreover, Amir pointed out that men prefer to marry women without a university degree to ensure their dominance in family life. Amir believes that Eritrean men, especially those with higher education, are always in dilemmas.

> On one side, they are aware that highly educated women are an asset to family and children. On the other side, such women are independent who do not want to live in the shadows of their husbands. Therefore, they [men] have to choose whether they

> need a traditional Eritrean family where the father acts as the head or ruler, or a family based on equality and shared leadership. (Amir)

The above statement spells out the view that many Eritrean male graduates hold on marriage and women. The main argument here is that some Eritrean men graduates want to marry women of the same education level, but they are afraid of losing the traditional patriarchal Eritrean society and all the power and privilege associated with it. Amir pointed out that highly educated men can profit by marrying graduates. However, they first need to recognise marriage as a partnership and women as equal partners. Unless they do this, they are unlikely to have a healthy and successful marriage based on mutual understanding and respect and might end in divorce. It is more likely that women in general and graduate women, in particular, would eventually walk out of a misogynistic relationship (DeKesered, Dragiewicz & Schwartz, 2017).

Amir's statement is also reflected in my interviews with many other participants such as Ermias, Marry, Michael, Senait, Simret, Yodit and Weini. They affirmed that some Eritrean men are still thinking of the old times, a period when the man was considered as the 'head' of the household which bids every household member serve at the pleasure of the head. Hence, they find a partner who has lower educational qualification or less professional life to maintain their patriarchal privilege and focus on advancing their professional life instead of sharing housework and childcare responsibilities. These arguments support findings which evidence that women's higher education and job attainment have a significant effect on men's choice of a partner and, perhaps, their marital instability (see Booth et al., 1984; Byrne & Barling, 2017; University of Michigan, 2004).

Moreover, my findings show that migrants' socio-cultural and economic perceptions have significant effect on family formation. As stated in Chapter Six, integration is a gradual process. My participants eventually learned to adjust to the UK and gain access to essential services. This does not mean that they have abolished the Eritrean culture, values and traditions. Eritrean culture still influences many of their activities including the choice of partners in the UK. Men in Eritrea, as in many parts of Africa, dominate the socio-economic and political sectors of the country. As noted by Indira and Vijayalakshmi:

> Women have legal rights to education, equal pay for work, and property rights; however, in practice men retained privileged access to education, employment, and control of economic resources. Women are not enjoying the social status equal to men (2015: 2).

This study further elaborates that male domination is pertinent to marriage and family life. With the increase in love marriages throughout the country, highly educated women face less interference with their decision to marry a partner of their choice. However, even in love marriages, it is usually men who are expected to initiate the relationship and finally propose for marriage. Marry said:

> It is not common and socially acceptable for women to approach someone to ask whether he is willing to marry her. Besides, some of the Eritreans [men] that I meet here [in the UK] do not want to take responsibility. They prefer to use women as their sex partner. They try to use women's social and emotional loneliness for their advantage. This usually surprises me and sometimes makes me lose faith in men.

Marry's excerpt consists of two significant points. First, it indicates that the perception of traditional Eritrean society towards women retains its currency; it is not appropriate for women to propose marriage. This provides men with better opportunities to set their criteria, choose and propose to their partners. Second, her account shows that some Eritrean migrants manipulate women, targeting their vulnerability. They take the women's loneliness and insecurity to their advantage and make unreasonable demands such as unwanted sexual advances. In fact, as shown above, all my participants experienced loneliness and vulnerability. Yet, my research maintains the fact that women migrants are more vulnerable to mistreatment (see Kawar, 2004; Palumbo & Sciurba, 2018). Marry's testimony suggests that some highly educated women migrants are exposed to sexual abuse and exploitation, even from migrants of the same origin. This was disturbing to Marry, as she assumed that her fellow Eritrean migrants would protect women instead of looking for ways to exploit them. She pointed out that such experiences negatively influenced her trust and perception of men.

Marry also expressed the view that some Eritrean migrants have misunderstood the UK culture, especially with regard to marriage and family formation. Those migrants believe that the family formation of the native British people is characterised by cohabitation, which is living together without marriage (Perelli-Harris et al., 2014; Waite, 2000). Therefore, those particular migrants want to cohabit, as an alternative to being single. They want to have shared quarters and sex life without marriage. A similar account emerged in my interview with Weini. She mentioned that some Eritrean men migrants do not want to marry and take responsibility. Instead, they try to convince women to cohabit with them noting that it is a modern (Western) way of relationship because:

> They think that the native [British] people have no or less interest in marriage. However, as a public servant in the UK, I have met many people and have understood that this perception is not true, especially among the middle or high-class people, particularly the highly educated one. They have a high value for marriage and family. I assume those people [Eritreans] have less information about the UK. (Weini)

Here Weini's claim suggests that some Eritrean migrants try to emulate certain things without having profound knowledge and understanding of them. Based on her experience, she explained that marriage or civil partnership is common in the UK including among White British people. The main point here is that many Eritreans make mighty generalisations about life in the UK, without enough knowledge and understanding of the situation. The Office for National Statistics (2015: 2) indicated that, in 2015, the UK's 'most common family type was married or civil partner couple family', making 12.5 million of the 18.7 million families in the country. The report further revealed that the number of cohabiting couple family accounted for about a quarter (3.2 million) of the married or civil partner couple family in the same year. Married or civil partner couple family is also higher among White British people than black communities. For example, the study by Berthoud (2000: 6) found that 'only 39 percent of Caribbean adults under the age of sixty are in a formal marriage, compared with 60 percent of White adults under sixty'. The 2011 Census also showed that 33.2 percent of White British households were made up of married couples or civil partners, compared to 21.6 percent of blacks and 26.2 percent of Black Africans (Office for National Statistics, 2019).

These reports, to some extent, confirm Weini's points that White British people have a higher regard for marriage or civil partnership than black African communities in the UK. It is

important to note that Africa is not a single country with similar values, attitudes and traditions. Besides, being married or in a civil partnership does not ensure the stability of the family unit. Despite the decrease in crude divorce rates partly due to a decline in marriage, the UK experienced increasing marital instability in the past two decades (Chen & Yip, 2018). Moreover, considering the view that marriage is seen as more stable than cohabiting relationships (D'Onofrio, 2011), the consequence of divorce is serious for divorced men and women as well as for children with divorced parents (Chen & Yip, 2018). However, Marry and Weini emphasised the male migrants' unwillingness to take full responsibility for their actions, rather than comparing the different types of marriages. They claimed that some men approach women without any intention to form a long-lasting relationship. The lack of commitment and unwillingness to take responsibility in relationships influence the development of a strong family and, thus, building a strong community, affecting all aspects of life from health and wellbeing to the local economy and environment (Callan, 2014). As shown above, it is also important to note that most of the Eritrean migrants do not keep making such generalisations as they integrate to the UK and become aware of the country's social fabric including the value placed on a strong family, regardless of the type of family or relationship (see Jenkins, Pereira & Evans, 2008).

The distribution and discrepancy between the number of men and women Eritrean migrants in the UK is another reason raised, by Neguse, Solomon, Weini and other participants, regarding marriage. In the following excerpt, Weini discusses the distribution of Eritrean graduates and the influence of parents vis-à-vis marriage.

> We are occupied with work and do not usually meet. It is not easy to find someone suitable, as there is less communication to know each other. Eritreans are scattered all

> over the UK. So, the number of Eritreans to choose from a particular location is quite few. Besides, we do not look for foreigners because our families do not support that. (Weini)

The number of Eritrean women asylum applicants is lower than that of men (Home Office, 2018a). Yet, my findings show that some highly educated women migrants struggle to find a suitable partner for marriage. As can been seen above, Weini's statement suggests that the problem is not only related to the small number of Eritreans in the UK, but also to lack of social interaction among them due to distance and work responsibilities. This affects the partner selection and family formation by the migrants. Many of my participants pointed out that men can choose their bride with the help of a third party such as families or friends (see also WeldeKidan, 2015; Yaried, 2013). Amir is one of my participants who was planning to marry from Eritrea, instead of finding a partner in the UK. He believes that 'finding a partner from Eritrea helps to marry someone with a profound knowledge of the Eritrean culture and tradition'. Similarly, Berhane stated that he decided to marry from Eritrea because there are many women he could select from. The common point here is that men can choose and bring a spouse from Eritrea through the arranged marriage system.

In arranged marriage, 'usually the father of the son approaches the father of daughter and they make all the arrangements' (Mezengi, 2005: 8). This traditional method gave Berhane a chance to select his partner and ask his family to approach the bride's family for approval. Such opportunity is almost non-existent for women because it is traditionally unacceptable for women or their family to take an initiative in arranged marriages. Hence, despite their educational capital and small numbers, it is more challenging for Eritrean women migrants to find a suitable marriage partner in a short period. This adds to the loneliness, homesickness

and nostalgia they experience in the UK. As discussed above, such problems negatively influence the mental health of the migrants, which is significant for successful integration to the new society (Gerber, 2016; Sedikides et al., 2009).

My study further reveals that families influence the marriage decisions of their children by swaying the partner selection criteria. Marriage in Eritrea concerns the whole family rather than the two people who would be joining in matrimony (Mezengi, 2005; Shabait, 2014). Most of my participants noted that they could select their partners themselves, but they also need to consider their family's values and thoughts. For instance, I found that age and country of origin are two important factors in considering a partner. The minimum age of my participants is 33 years (see Chapter Four). Nevertheless, the Eritrean Population Health Survey 2010 indicated that women in Eritrea usually marry before the age of 25, in contrast to a significant number of men who marry after reaching 25 years (National Statistics Office and Fafo AIS, 2013). The report also indicated that the median age at first marriage among women aged 30 to 49 is 18 years, which is nine years lower than men of the same age group.

My findings suggest that men might look for younger partners. Some of my interviewees associate this view with traditional marriage practices and the fertility level of women. Women above the age of 35 have a higher risk of infertility, miscarriage, and other pregnancy-related complications (Sauer, 2015). This puts women above the age of 30 in a disadvantaged position for marriage in comparison to younger ones, particularly among patriarchal societies. Apparently, research shows that age to some extent affects women's marriage opportunity in many countries like China where women unmarried by the age of 30 are usually referred to as 'leftover women' (Hahn & Elshult, 2016; To, 2013). However, these views overlook the global phenomenon of marrying late and the effect of educational

qualification (see Werber, 2018)). Indeed, it is very difficult (if not impossible) to earn first degree by the age of eighteen.

In addition, most of my respondents disclosed that their family want them to choose a partner with the same nationality to preserve their identity. Endorsing Weini's thoughts, Neguse told me:

> I thought it is the right thing to marry from my country of origin. Of course, my parents would not approve of a foreigner bride. I also believe that it would help me to keep my identity. We have some attachment to Eritrea, regardless of the citizenship we get or the place we live. (Neguse)

As indicated above, marriage could be a means of maintaining an earlier identification with Eritrea. This is not limited to Eritrean migrants. Similarly, migrants to the UK from many other countries, such as Pakistan and India, also seek a partner from their country of origin (Charsley et al., 2016). Furthermore, Berthoud (2000) stated that most of the migrants who came to the UK as adults were married to (or lived with) an individual who shares the same ethnicity. Even though interracial or inter-national marriage could potentially broaden the partners' perspectives, many prefer a partner who shares the language, culture and worldview they were raised in to guarantee a good fit of ideas and customs (Lievens, 1999). Moreover, most of my respondents noted that marrying within their ethnicity would allow them to connect with and return to Eritrea. Many of my participants and their family expect that they would return to Eritrea once the push factors are resolved (Mezengi, 2005). Hence, they look for an Eritrean partner to make this dream possible.

Nevertheless, some participants expressed that this argument mainly considers the push factors in Eritrea, while overlooking the connection of the entire family, especially children, to the host country. Besides, participants such as Michael and Issack do not want to leave the UK, a country which offered them human rights protection and better economic opportunity. The socio-economic and political condition of Eritrea might improve in the future. Yet, even those who would consider returning to Eritrea are not sure whether their children would agree. Habtay, Neguse and Wolday told me that they cannot return to Eritrea, leaving their children in the UK. Despite the varied opinions on the issue of returning to Eritrea, my participants are united in the conviction of the need to keep their bond with the country and their family. Thus, they want to marry an Eritrean, teach their children about Eritrean values and traditions, and visit the country as much as possible. The next section discusses parenthood or child-rearing.

7.4 Parenthood/Child-rearing

The previous chapter (Chapter Six) discusses the challenges and strategies of my participants to effectively balance the Eritrean and UK cultures, and move fluidly between the two. In this section, I show that the challenge becomes tougher during parenthood or child-rearing because the Eritrean migrants want their children to keep or learn their culture of origin while feeling part of the UK. As indicated above, some of the children came from Eritrea through family reunion, while others are second-generation children born in the UK. Nevertheless, they both need to balance Eritrean culture with the UK way of life, or vice versa, for a successful integration outcome (Sam, 2000). Overall, my study indicates that parental guidance, age and educational level of children influence their successful integration to the host societies

Most of my respondents view their socio-cultural integration to the UK at the family level. They believe that their success or failure of integrating in the UK, to some extent, could be measured through the success or failure of their family in general and children, in particular, in gaining access to required services while keeping their Eritrean identity. I suggest that parents first need to understand the host culture and way of life in order to support their children. In doing so, I recognise the fact that being a migrant and a parent presents several opportunities and challenges. Some of the challenges are rooted in Eritrean culture, which in many cases limits children's right to participate in decision-making affecting their lives. It also allows for corporal punishment for disciplinary purposes. According to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (2008), the Eritrean delegation to the Committee on the Rights of the Child confirmed that a 'light beating' is allowed to encourage a child to study. Contrary to this, smacking children is illegal in many parts of Europe, including some parts of the UK, particularly Wales. (Welsh Government, 2019). Moreover, section 58 of the UK Children Act 2004:

> Limits the availability of the "reasonable punishment" defence in cases of alleged assaults by parents against their children. It removes the defence of reasonable punishment for assaults occasioning actual or grievous bodily harm, or which constitute cruelty. Parents who cause injuries to a child such as grazes, scratches, abrasions, bruising, swellings and superficial cuts risk being charged with actual bodily harm, for which the "reasonable punishment" defence is not available (Government Equalities Office, 2011: 53).

This suggests that the Eritrean migrants must treat their children differently from how they might in Eritrea. The majority of my participants stated that they concur with and adhere to

the above law limiting the degree of corporal punishment by parents. Habtay, Neguse, and Senait further noted that they need to reflect on their childhood and assess their upbringing in order to help their children to have a better future. They argued for the need to challenge the negative effects of Eritrean culture while focusing on the positive sides. Neguse opined that it is important to discuss with children and listen to their needs or concerns. He believes that creating a good relationship with children helps in setting a common agenda. Habtay and Senait on their part said:

> There are lots of dos and don'ts in Eritrea. It is a bit prescriptive. There are aspects of the society that I really appreciate and others that I disagree with and do not want in my family. Therefore, I am looking for ways to compromise and take the good ones. It is a reconciliation of different cultural predispositions by taking good values. (Habtay)

> The way we are raised does not encourage children to ask and explore things. We are reserved and shy. Many times, we leave things [out of fear or shyness] without understanding the main point. This is a big problem. I am a mom now, and I do not want to repeat that in my child. (Senait)

Habtay's and Senait's points indicate that Eritrean culture has many practices frowned on in the global North. Reflecting upon her experiences, Senait explained that many questions or needs of children in Eritrea are overlooked or suppressed. Children are expected to simply follow their parents' orders. In this context, both participants asserted that they do not want to be authoritarian parents who exert excessive control over their children through power and coercion. Evidently, a growing amount of research reveals that authoritarian parenting can

affect the development of children including their confidence and emotional stability (King, Vidourek & Merianos, 2016). This suggests that the Eritrean migrants need to understand the childcare and protection system of the UK to protect their children from harm.

The participants of this study were raised in Eritrean culture which constructs children as obedient to parental authority, although the value placed on authoritarian parenting among parents in Eritrea is decreasing (Ola, 2018). Yet, as Habtay said, the Eritrean migrants need cultural transformation to negotiate the two cultures. For instance, they frequently might come to challenge the perception they have grown up with, that parents have absolute authority to impose their decisions over their children. In fact, this is significant for the children as well as the parents themselves. Mistreating children would endanger parent-child relationship and put parents at risk of losing their children because children in the UK have the legal protection and freedom to challenge parental authority (Renzaho, Dhingra & Georgeou, 2017). It is also possible that children could abuse their freedom and legal protection unless parents build a good parent-child relationship. Hence, it is safe to say that migrant parents need to avoid harmful ways of raising their children, including the use of corporal punishment. Besides, they need to understand the UK rules and way of life to help their children and avoid any legal repercussions.

Furthermore, this study reveals that my participants support their children to cultivate dual identities or a new form of 'British Eritrean' identity. I believe that second-generation children have less difficulty in integrating to the UK since they were born and raised in the country. However, children born outside of the UK often face socio-cultural and academic problems. Confirming this, Meron said:

> My wife and two children joined me in the UK as part of the family reunion. My children had to go to school and make friends, which was not easy at the beginning. I can tell that the situation was worse for my older child, who was in grade six, than my younger one who was in her early stage of elementary school. My younger child took about half a year to integrate into the system. However, the older one was struggling for about two years. Her English level was low [compared to native English speakers] and it negatively affected her academic performance.

The above narrative shows Meron's concern and experience concerning his children. Like their parent, the children struggled to cope with the British education system, which simultaneously affected their social interaction. Hence, they needed social and academic support. Similarly, a study of the Somali community in Finland revealed that children with a migrant background 'perform relatively poorly at school' (Ismail, 2019: 2). Despite ethnic and other factors, this shows that African migrants share many similar challenges. Meron's experiences also indicate that his younger child integrated more easily to the UK, suggesting age difference could be a factor. Even though it might not be wise to draw generalisations from this specific case, Meron's testimony aligns with other studies. For instance, Aslund, Bohlmark and Nordstrom Skans (2009) stated that age at arrival affects the integration of migrants to the host country. The authors further explained that children who arrived at a higher age had 'lower shares of natives' and 'higher exposure to immigrants of similar ethnic origin' (2009: 1).

Moreover, my participants explained that they tutor and motivate their children to effectively integrate into the new environment, including the education system. Meron expressed that academic support was important to improve the academic performance of his children.

Besides, Wolday and Simon stated that they had to support their newly arrived partners to integrate into the new society. This includes helping them to access relevant public services and understand British values. Nonetheless, this does not mean that newly arrived partners cannot support their children to fit into the new society. The data collected for this study suggest that they play their part in the process of raising caring, confident and responsible children, by managing the children's social and academic activities.

Another important point that emerged in this study is that children, like anyone else, gradually learn the UK culture and integrate into the host society. They master the English language, make friends and gradually tend to 'assimilate' into the UK culture. However, the issue of assimilation threatens my participants' intention of retaining their Eritrean culture. Therefore, to avoid that, they teach their children Eritrean language, values and traditions. For Simon, reuniting with his family was a relief. He supported his wife and children to fit into the UK. However, he noted that his children were more inclined to British culture. Simon was worried about the future of his children, particularly regarding losing their Eritrean identity and roots. Similarly, Habtay and Helen expressed a desire for their children to balance Eritrean and UK values.

> I am worried that my children, especially those who were born here, might lose their Eritrean identity. I do not want them to be detached from their country of origin because it is home, where they do not need to worry about being accepted or being part of the community. Besides, I do not want them to face identity crisis by hanging in between Eritrea and the UK. It could be a problem. So, I teach them the Eritrean culture and values. (Simon)

> My child is my first one and I do not have much experience in parenting. I use different strategies even by looking into my family values and take what is good in there to help my daughter to have multiple identities. I do not want her to possess only the British values and ignore the Eritrean ones. I do not want her to be confined to one identity. I want her to have multiple identities because I want her to be a critical person with a wide worldview. I know this is challenging, considering my socio-cultural background. (Habtay)

> Here, having children comes with great responsibility. Back home we [Eritreans] have family support and even children play outdoor without anyone looking after them. Here, the system is different. Children should be watched out the whole day and we are on our own. The way we raise our children is also another challenge. I want to raise my children to be open-minded. I want them to combine both [Eritrean and British] cultures to help them become successful. I know it is not easy. I read different books to learn how best children could be raised in the UK and combine it with our [Eritrean] way. (Helen)

The above accounts hold many points. They all raised the concept of identity and parents' responsibilities and concerns about the future of their children. It is clearly seen that my participants wanted their children to earn the recognition of both countries and societies. They noted that having multiple identifications would enable their children to effectively balance the Eritrean and UK cultures. This substantiates the argument that cultural identifications belong both to the past and the future (Hall, 1996). They are relational and incomplete which makes them always in process (Grossberg, 1996). Simon's statement, however, goes deeper than that. It shows the stigma migrants or asylum seekers feel with

regards to their place of origin. As discussed earlier, most of my participants are not comfortable telling people that they are refugees or asylum seekers. This is because they could be easily misjudged, which affects their career opportunities and dignity as human beings. In their views, many people perceive that asylum seekers are poor, dependent and unskilled. This also affects children, including those who are born in the host country, as they may well feel marginalised in their own country of birth.

Wolday told me that his son, who is in secondary school, had started to question his identity.

> My children feel that they equally [like anyone else] belong to the UK. However, as they get older, this perception starts to decrease. They start to notice things around them and search for answers. For example, they notice that they do not have many White friends. They also notice that they get bullied because of their country/continent of origin. In such condition, they need parental guidance on their journey to develop an identity that could help them to face their environment with confidence. (Wolday)

Wolday further extended Simon's view by describing the challenges encountering migrant children and the role of parental guidance. Many participants in this research also shared his thoughts. They are afraid that their children might be trapped between the two countries or identities, belonging neither to the UK nor to Eritrea. As can be seen, my participants try to protect their children from identity crisis and other similar confusions. Unless this is done, they are afraid that the children might question their identifications, values and future, which expose them to personal conflict and depression (Elmer, 2018). In addition, participants like Simon claimed that there is individual and structural racism in the UK that affects the future

and sense of belongingness of their children. Indeed, in support of Wolday's claim, research confirms that immigrant youth and second-generation children experience more bullying and other peer aggression than native-born or third-generation counterparts (Maynard et al., 2016; Pottie et al., 2015). Hence, as parents, my participants try to shape the cultural identifications of their children by supporting them to balance Eritrean culture and British values. In doing so, they play a significant role in their children's identity formation.

In this context, my participants noted the importance of educational qualifications of parents in guiding their children. It helps parents to work with their children and other partners at home, in schools and the community. Explaining the difficulty of parenting and the significance of educational attainment, Habtay concluded:

> For someone with my cultural background, parenting in this country is not easy. For example, the school environment in the UK is very different [from that of Eritrea]….different language, culture and methodology. My educational attainment helps me here in understanding the system and the culture. It helps me to understand why society behaves in a certain way. I know my own identity, culture, language and religion, which help me to appreciate or look into other things. (Habtay)

As shown above, migrant parents face cultural and institutional challenges in raising their children. Supported by their education, they strive to ensure the bright future of their children. For instance, they teach them Eritrean culture, values and traditions in order to cultivate multiple identifications. Moreover, my participants explained that they help their children to connect and socialise with their extended family. They further reported that such integration mechanism contributes to the development of the children's cultural

identifications and sense of belonging to Eritrean culture. It also teaches them about the social life of Eritreans.

However, some of my participants lack family support in raising their children because of the distance between the two countries. Besides, not all my participants can visit Eritrea mostly due to their refugee status in the UK and political activism against the Eritrean government. Hence, as discussed above, some had the opportunity to visit Eritrea, whereas others arranged short family reunions outside the country. For instance, Michael told me that his daughter was complaining about not meeting her close relatives such as grandparents, aunts and uncles in person. Therefore, he arranged a family reunion in another African country, where she was able to see her grandparents and other close family members. In contrast, Wolday managed to send his family to Eritrea. Both Michael and Wolday felt that the experience enabled the children to re/connect with Eritrea, develop their language capacity and build a strong family relationship. Most of my participants also take their children to Eritrean churches and social events to show them Eritrean culture and way of life. However, my respondents were not contented with the activities of Eritrean communities in the UK. They noted that the communities are not well organised and usually lack activities targeted towards children.

In general, this section shows that socio-cultural integration is a complex and continuing process. Additional challenges come with family reunion and parenthood. Nevertheless, highly educated Eritrean migrants use their qualifications to help their children to reconcile Eritrean and UK cultural identities. This suggests that the influence of parents is an important factor for the integration and identity formation of children (Aslund, Bohlmark & Nordstrom Skans, 2009).

7.5 Gender and Family Relations

Migration increases the economic power and freedom of women, helping them to improve their social status and lead their lives independently (O'Neil, Fleury & Foresti, 2016). Yet, as explained earlier, women migrants, including highly educated women, are more likely to face abuse and other forms of mistreatment than men (see also Kawar, 2004; Palumbo & Sciurba, 2018). In this section, I further show that women participants in my study experience more challenges in reconciling their career and family responsibility. Some interrupt their career to take care of their children because they lack family support and cannot afford to pay for nannies.

As discussed above, in much Eritrean society, men are viewed as the head of the family. The notion of 'head of the family' is mostly associated with decision-making and division of labour. Many men, therefore, use this to maintain an unequal balance of power in socio-economic and political arenas leading to patriarchal dominance (Alesina, Brioschi &La Ferrara, 2016). In fact, research shows that some women justify the superiority of men as the head of the household and their right to lead the family (Bhattacharyya, 2018). This could be attributed to women's lack of awareness of their rights and religious factors (Afful &Attom, 2018). Yet, such perception encourages men who would like to maintain patriarchal dominance. Bhattacharyya (2018) noted that patriarchal mind-set and misogyny are deeply rooted across different cultures in the world, especially in developing countries like Eritrea. My findings further show that such patriarchal perceptions define gender roles and family relations. The majority of my participants tend to uphold traditional gender roles in which women are expected to take on the primary care role for children and do household work. For instance, Senait said:

> Our boys are not so supportive at home. Migration has brought less change to the belief of men [Eritrean] on traditional gender roles. They do not usually participate in household works such as cooking and cleaning. They also take a lower role in babysitting.

Senait's argument indicates that some Eritrean men in the UK have not completely abolished the Eritrean traditional culture. They expect their wives to do most of the household works on top of the job they do for a living. However, this does not mean that women have continued to be submissive to their husbands. In this regard, Weini asserted that traditional gender roles conflict with the desire of highly educated Eritrean women to use their educational qualifications and develop their professional capabilities.

> Highly educated women do not want to spend their time cooking and doing other housework. They want to engage in a professional job and advance their career. As member of a family, they want to share their responsibility, rather than taking the primary care role. Indeed, the selfishness of men and the desire of women to be independent are causing many highly educated women to be single. (Weini)

Weini's explanation highlights the opposition of some highly educated women migrants to traditional gender roles. It shows that such women want to realise their dreams, instead of doing childcare and other household works. She also argued that such opposition causes some women to marry late or remain single. Moreover, the evidence from this study indicates that higher education achievement and economic opportunities give women more power to see their marriage an equal partnership. In fact, Ermias and Neguse reported that the UK has given women economic independence and legal protection regardless of their education. The

notion behind Ermias's and Neguse's statement is to assert that women's complaint about inequality is not mainly determined by their educational qualifications. It suggests that other low-skilled Eritrean women migrants have shown similar opposition mainly influenced by Britain's economic support and equality laws. This requires further research. Yet, it aligns with research which indicates that economic (in)dependence and legal protection affect women's emancipation from underlying patriarchal structure (see Dalal, 2011; Sida, 2015).

Unlike Eritrea, the UK provides financial payments to people who are on a low income to support their living costs (Andersen, 2019). In addition, different UK laws including the Equality Act 2010 legally protect people from discrimination, harassment and victimisation in the workplace and the wider society (Government Equalities Office, 2013). It is worth noting that women are also legally protected in Eritrea. However, the law is not effectively reinforced to properly tackle certain crimes or discrimination. For instance, concerning domestic violence, Indira and Vijayalakshmi stated:

> Although domestic violence is a crime by law, wife-beating is very common in Eritrea. There is no effective enforcement of law that punishes such violence and tremendous social pressure prevents women from reporting it publicly. Families and religious clergies generally address such issues and it was estimated that more than 65 percent of women in Asmara, the capital, are victims of domestic violence (2015: 2).

As noted above, both cultural and economic issues are significant in determining gender roles among the Eritrean migrants. Indeed, even women who were born in modern Western countries are subjected to mistreatment and male domination. They do not enjoy equal socio-economic status as men. For instance, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (2018)

indicated that women are under-represented in senior managerial and political positions of the UK including in executive roles of the country's largest 100 companies (29 percent), and the UK Parliament (32 percent). The report also confirmed that a larger proportion of women become victims of rape, sexual harassment and domestic violence, than men. In addition, the global 'me too movement' demonstrated that even celebrities and successful women experience various forms of abuse such as sexual harassment and domestic violence (Bhattacharyya, 2018; Zarkov & Davis, 2018). This explains the fact that the experience of my participants fits into the wider global and national picture of women's mistreatment. Nevertheless, the situation is worse for women migrants especially women of colour and working-class women such as the participants of this study. They generally are more likely to face racial discrimination in recruitment practices (Wood et al., 2009), and to encounter sexual abuse and fail to report their perpetrators (Mohan, 2018).

Furthermore, many respondents emphasised on the effect of socio-economic independence of women in gender roles and family relations. The effect of gender roles is pertinent in the Eritrean migrants who participated in this research project. Many claimed that such cultural practices create a balanced family responsibility with clear job description. This might seem a good point, but it is mainly beneficial to the socio-economic and political advancement of men. Concerning the socio-economic conflict of men and women in the UK, Neguse said:

> Some Eritrean women in the UK are becoming dominant and self-centred [economically]. They are less tolerant [than traditional Eritrean women] to any mistake done by their partners. Besides, they do not want to take primary family responsibility. They take the child benefit from the government, but they want to spend most of it on their personal purposes.

Neguse is criticising the behavioural change and money usage of some Eritrean women migrant in the UK. Amir, in support of this idea, also complained that 'Eritrean women in the UK are diverting away from their culture and tradition'. Nevertheless, in response, many of my female participants indicated that this is a longing for traditional Eritrean culture, which benefits men while excluding and subordinating women. Some male participants also joined their female counterparts in criticising the traditional patriarchal perception. Michael stated that 'I pity men who would like to bring cultural advantages that they used to enjoy in Eritrea to the UK; it is an indication for lack of confidence or self-doubt'. These accounts show that there is a conflict between the will to maintain traditional gender roles, and women's opposition to patriarchal domination. Moreover, Weini and Senait explained that the conflict is basically a clash of different cultures giving rise to strained family relations.

> The conflict of interest or misunderstanding [between men and women] is influenced by our upbringings. We still keep many of our traditions, values and behaviours. For example, we do not usually communicate putting our emotions aside, and solve our problems accordingly. That is how we grew up, and many times we find it difficult to change even abroad. We care more about our pride, instead of looking at things calmly and reach a common understanding. (Weini)

> Highly educated women get more respect in Eritrea for their educational qualifications. However, women generally are respected for what they are [as women] in the UK. They can express themselves and do whatever they want to do, without fear of societal judgement. No one says that they should not do this or that based on

> their gender, which is quite different from Eritrea where women are not expected to behave in a certain way because of their gender. (Senait)

Weini is concerned about the socio-cultural transformation of Eritrean migrants. Her account highlights that the migrants have kept some traditional practices and attitudes which she finds to be harmful to women. Besides, Senait opines that Eritrean women in the UK are free of gender categorisation and societal judgement. Her narrative fits into the discourse about the advantage and top position of women in European societies including the UK (see Baumann, 2017). As shown above, it is important to note that women are under-represented in high-level positions and exposed to sexual harassment and domestic violence in the UK. However, as I already discussed, it is fair to say that the controls are not as obvious or as tight as they are in Eritrea.

Many of my participants also noted that Eritrean culture affects how Eritrean migrants respond to gender roles and family relations in the UK. They found it difficult to easily change their behaviours, perceptions or actions as they were deeply rooted in their culture or upbringings. Yet, the data collected for this study indicate that it is not impossible. For example, Habtay and Haben expressed that they had done their best to identify and leave any oppressive practices. They both want to be good examples to their children. Such change further evidences that cultural identifications are not fixed, but the formation and transformation of identities take time. It might not be a coincidence that Haben is married to a graduate, and Habtay is helping his wife to get an undergraduate degree.

Despite their strong opposition to traditional gender roles, most of the women I interviewed still do most of the tasks at home. They also take the primary role in raising kids. During my

interview, Senait and Helen came with their babies since they could not find anyone to look after them. They told me that they have to shoulder double responsibilities or quit their job to raise children.

> As a working mom of two, one of the main challenges I face is to balance my professional and family life. Back home, I could leave them [my children] with my family, if I want to go anywhere. However, here I lack social support. So, they are either with me or in day-care. (Helen)

> I have a baby now and I am raising him alone. He is away from my extended family: sister, aunt, cousin, etc. So, the responsibility is on me, which partly caused me to stop my professional work. I have my husband with me, but Eritrean husbands are not good with housework and babysitting. (Senait)

Senait's and Helen's testimonies show that many women struggle to balance work and family, and some sacrifice their professional life for the sake of their family. Despite society's acceptance of women into a workforce, motherhood comes with the responsibility of raising a child (Poduval & Poduval, 2009). Both work and family [motherhood] need time and commitment. As a result, working women bear dual responsibilities, which cause less career advancement and high career interruptions (Shah & Shah, 2016). My participants further revealed that women who lack family support are more likely to be victims of such career-related issues. As Senait did, they even interrupt their professional job to take care of their children. Furthermore, some are faced with switching to part-time employment and moving down the occupational ladder into 'lower-skilled and lower-paid jobs' (Alakeson, 2012: 1).

In my view, this goes beyond family commitment to their children. It reflects traditional gender roles and power relations within the society in which men were seen as providers, while women were used to stay at home to take care of the household and children (see also Scott & Clery, 2013). Less has changed as the practice goes on more or less the same way. If someone has to stay at home and take care of the house, it is mostly women regardless of their educational qualifications and career. In fact, research shows that the participation of those who seek to be involved fathers is not only limited to occupying a support role during early years of care (see also Wall and Arnold, 2007), but they also fear societal judgement because of their sex (Hodkinson & Brooks, 2018). This suggests that men would find it hard to equally involve in everyday care task especially in public spaces.

7.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed the connection between migration, family formation and gender roles. I analysed these three concepts in relation to educational qualification of my participants. My study extends prior studies that took family as a central component of migration research in general (Cooke, 2008) and the socio-cultural integration of migrants in particular (Beaton, Musgrave & Liebl, 2018). My findings show that many migrants, especially those who are perceived as 'vagabonds', leave their country without their families. Moreover, there is a delay in family reunion due to the Eritrean emigration restriction and the UK asylum process. The separation causes various mental health problems which affect successful integration of the migrants to the UK. I also found that some Eritrean migrants travel to Eritrea to meet their parents or other members of their extended families. This, however, comes with an economic and political price. They pay the '2 percent diaspora

income tax' and sign the 'regret form' required by the government of Eritrea in order to visit the country or get any consular services.

The significance and challenge of marriage and child-rearing are important points that emerged in my study. The evidence presented elaborates on the influence of Eritrean traditional culture in family formation. It also explains the connection between marriage and migration. Marriage has a special social value among the Eritrean migrants who participated in this study, as they experience separation from family or loneliness. Besides, migration affects marriage in different ways such as finding and choosing a partner. Like anyone else, the migrants search for what they call a 'suitable partner'. Nevertheless, my findings suggest that, unlike women, most of the men migrants care less about their partners' educational qualifications. Instead, they look for partners who would maintain traditional gender roles especially those who could take a primary role in household work and childrearing. The fact that most of my male participants are married to women without a university degree could be a strong manifestation of this. The evidence also reflects other findings that highly educated men feel insecure marrying to highly educated women and those with high job attainment (see Byrne & Barling, 2017; University of Michigan, 2004). In addition, my study shows that Eritrean men migrants have a better chance of finding a partner both in Eritrea and the UK. They can seek a spouse from Eritrea and marry through the arranged marriage system with the help of their family or friends. However, this option is not available for women because they do not usually initiate arranged marriage or propose for marriage.

Furthermore, this study points out that migrant parents face many challenges concerning the identities of their children. They are afraid that the children might eventually find it hard to identify themselves with the UK and/or Eritrea. The evidence presented above indicates that

children gradually learn the host society's culture and even tend to assimilate. However, they experience more bullying and other peer victimisation than native-born counterparts (Maynard et al., 2016; Pottie et al., 2015). These experiences can make children feel rejected. Hence, aided by their educational attainment, my participants attempt to nurture their children with multiple identifications in order to broaden their understanding and shape their actions. In particular, they teach them the Eritrean language, values and traditions to balance the Eritrean and UK cultures. This corroborates research that indicates the significant role of parents in the process of integration and identity formation of children (Aslund, Bohlmark & Nordstrom Skans, 2009). The main goal is to help the children to gain access to essential services and avoid any experience of rejection in both countries. However, this requires a profound understanding of the two cultures and challenging harmful beliefs and practices to shape the identities of the children.

Another important point that emerged from my study is the clash between Eritrean patriarchal traditions and the socio-economic development of women. My findings maintain that migration increases the economic power and freedom of women (O'Neil, Fleury & Foresti, 2016). This enables women to improve their social status and lead an independent life. It also gives them more power to view their marriage an equal partnership. However, like any other women migrants (see Kawar, 2004; Palumbo & Sciurba, 2018), some women migrants who participated in this research project experienced sexual harassment and other forms of mistreatment. Furthermore, they do most of the household work and take the primary role in raising children. As a result, many strive to balance their job and household work (Shah & Shah, 2016), while others interrupt their career or shift to a part-time job to take care of their children (Alakeson, 2012). The findings of this study also suggest that the problem can be worse for those who lack family support to look after their children.

CHAPTER EIGHT

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

> No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite (Nelson Mandela[14]).

8.1 Introduction

This study explored the socio-cultural integration experiences of Eritrean migrants in the UK, by focusing on those who obtained a university degree in Eritrea, before migrating. It analysed the views and experiences of the migrants and considered the effect of their educational qualifications on the integration process in the UK. In the previous seven chapters, I discussed the rationale, theoretical and methodological frameworks, and empirical findings of the study. The previous three chapters, in particular, focus on the empirical findings of the study. In Chapter Five, I identified the causes and routes of the migration and provided an account of the early experiences of the migrants who participated in my study. Chapter Six discusses about the expectations, challenges and the strategies of the migrants to 'fit in' into the UK, while issues related to gender and family relations are presented in Chapter Seven. This chapter deals with the summary, conclusion and implications of the study. Here, I begin by summing up the entire empirical findings in relation to the research questions. Then, after concluding, I discuss the implications of the study. Finally, I describe the significance and limitations of the study and recommend issues for further research.

[14]Cited in Strauss, 2013

8.2 Summary

8.2.1 How Do Highly Educated Eritrean Migrants Explain Their Socio-cultural Integration within the UK?

This research question was aimed to discover the experiences of my participants concerning their socio-cultural integration process in the UK. It explored their account of events in the host country. Overall, as indicated in the empirical findings, the experiences of my participants can be explained into two levels: before and after receiving their refugee status. As discussed in Chapter Five, the first stage can be categorised into joy and vulnerability. Whereas the second stage can be narrated with the migrants' struggle to fit in and belong to the UK. In most cases, these experiences are highly influenced by the migrants' expectations upon arrival, getting their asylum paper and integrating to the socio-cultural and economic conditions of the UK. I borrow Schlossberg's (1981, 2011) transition theory to examine these experiences in detail. I then explore the participants' feelings and reactions to these events.

As discussed in Chapter Three, Schlossberg (2011) described three types of transitions: anticipated, unanticipated and non-event transitions. The findings of this study show that my participants' experiences do not fall under one specific form of transition or life event. Many participants found a large part of their experiences to be anticipated or unanticipated events (those that occur unexpectedly). As shown in the previous chapters, the highly educated Eritreans migrants are what Bauman (1996) refers 'vagabonds', in the sense that they are forced to leave their country to flee hostile socio-economic and political circumstances. They reached the UK after a long and risky journey hoping to receive asylum and start a new life within a short time. This indicates that the migrants had two main anticipations. First, they wanted to bring an end to their human rights violations, which they experienced in Eritrea and on their route to the UK. Therefore, they sought asylum to become individuals who

control their destiny. As Freire (2010) argued, this is about becoming full human beings. It is also about having a voice because they had been silenced, dehumanised, or literally dead for long as ‘Silence = Death’ (Jones, 2019: 2). Second, my participants were eager to start a new life as soon as they reached the UK. They wanted to develop themselves and support their family. Many were confident that their educational qualifications would help them to find a professional job or pursue graduate studies. Moreover, they thought that they had the necessary knowledge, skills and experiences to integrate into the new society.

My participants found some ‘anticipated events’ to indeed be part of their experience once they arrived in the UK. They chose the UK for its democratic principles and the English language. They believed that the UK is one of the countries which greatly values human rights. This was also connected to their probability of getting asylum in the country. The highly educated Eritrean migrants who participated in my study were finally granted refugee status, which many viewed as an indication of the UK's commitment to human rights. Despite the delanguaging and devaluation issues, the migrants’ qualifications were significant in helping them ‘fit in’ into the new environment. These experiences paved a way for the migrants to become productive members of UK society while maintaining their culture of origin. Many have already acquired British citizenship, but they still practice the Eritrean traditions in many ways such as wedding and child christening. At last, my participants’ experiences suggest that vagabonds can eventually be transformed into tourists. Their hard work and determination are finally rewarded with personal freedom and professional career. However, many of these did not happen quickly as per their expectations. Getting an early decision of their asylum application and swiftly integrating to the UK was a rare occurrence.

In most cases, my participants faced what Schlossberg (1981, 2011) calls ‘unanticipated events’ (those that occur unexpectedly) such as complicated asylum policy, deskilling and delanguaging. As per the UK asylum policy (Home Office, 1999, 2014), the Eritrean asylum seekers were excluded from any paid job and provided accommodation on a no-choice basis. Exclusion from work was difficult, especially for those who had family responsibility because some asylum seekers waited for more than six months for their asylum decision. Moreover, after getting refugee status, most of my participants did not get a professional job in their field of training due to academic, language and cultural factors. Besides, it took them time to reunite with their family left in Eritrea. These unanticipated events exposed the migrants to fear, loneliness, uncertainty, anxiety and other psychological distress.

Another significant experience of the highly educated Eritrean migrants is related to their response to the events they faced in the UK. As indicated above, the asylum policy and the delay in the decision on their asylum applications made them vulnerable. They felt that they were powerless to change the situation and, hence, waited and prayed for a positive outcome. They knew that they were excluded from the socio-economic spheres and their voice was silenced deliberately until they were recognised as refugees. In fact, this is what Roy (2004) spoke about when arguing that there is no such thing as the ‘voiceless’, but the ‘deliberately silenced or the preferably unheard’. The exclusion had a long-term effect on the socio-cultural integration of the migrants. For example, exclusion negatively affected the development of social and professional networking.

In addition, this study indicated that most of the participants in this project used three strategies to integrate into the socio-cultural and economic aspects of the UK. They went back to college to get a UK degree in order to re-qualify and improve their career

opportunities. Moreover, they volunteered in different institutions to gain local work experience and culture. Furthermore, my respondents used their educational attainment to learn the UK culture. They were able to read, interact with the host population and volunteer in different organisations which advanced their knowledge, skills and attitudes about the UK culture and lifestyle. This challenged some of their prior ideas, practices and experiences on issues such as child-raising. Besides, the migrants' cultural learning involved a continuous process of acculturation and deculturation leading to the formation of new identification. These practices reflect Kim's (1988, 2001) cross-cultural adaptation approach.

In this study, I also highlighted the migrants' experiences in relation to family formation and gender relations. The findings showed that socio-cultural integration can best be explained at the family level. This follows other studies (Kawar, 2004; Palumbo & Sciurba, 2018; Ratha, Mohapatra & Scheja, 2011) which indicate that women migrants are more vulnerable. My study further explains that the use of traditional practices in marriage and family relations offer men better opportunities in choosing a partner and doing less in domestic work, respectively. Additionally, the study found that the highly educated Eritrean migrants try to raise their children in a way that cultivates dual (British and Eritrean) identities. To do so, they help their children to learn the Eritrean language and culture.

8.2.2 What Are the Factors that Influence the Socio-cultural Integration of Highly Educated Eritrean Migrants?

As indicated in the above section, different factors influence the socio-cultural integration of migrants in their host countries. These factors further determine the joy, hope and vulnerability of the migrants. This study identified four sets of factors that affect socio-

cultural integration of migrants: biographical experiences, asylum and immigration policies, cultural differences and demographic factors.

Table 8.1 Factors that affect socio-cultural integration of migrants

Factors	Examples
Biographical experiences	• Migrant's previous experiences • Expectations towards the host countries • Personal initiatives and networks
Asylum and immigration policies	• Asylum decision time • Permission to work • Accommodation allocation • Family reunification
Cultural factors	• Cultural differences • Language capacity
Demographic factors	• Educational qualification • Gender • Marital status

Biographical experiences: As can be seen in the table above (Table 8.1), my study found that the migrants' previous experiences, expectations towards the host countries, and their integration efforts have significant effect on their socio-cultural integration. The migrants' previous experiences are mainly related to the socio-emotional difficulties that the participants encountered in their country of origin, during the migration journey and in their host country. The highly educated Eritrean migrants were vagabonds who were forced to flee their country of origin (Bauman, 1996). Most of them left Eritrea illegally by crossing the

highly militarised border to Ethiopia or Sudan. Their journey started with fear and trauma, and the negative experiences continued in the host country until they received their asylum paper.

The migrants' expectations are concerned with the perceptions or expectations of my participants towards economically developed Western countries including the UK. This study shows that migrants' expectations and the realities they face in the host country significantly influence their socio-cultural integration. As indicated above, my participants migrated for human rights conditions and self-improvement, expecting to swiftly start afresh in the UK. Some also anticipated that everyone in the UK lives a 'luxurious life'. However, many of these expectations and dreams did not come into reality, at least within a short period of time. In contrast, the migrants experienced deskilling and other forms of exclusion, which they linked to nostalgia, depression and integration paradox (see also Verkuyten, 2016).

Furthermore, my study indicated that migrants' initiatives and networks are important in facilitating their integration into the host country. Most of the highly educated Eritrean migrants took a personal initiative to upgrade their educational qualifications and gain local work experience. These events were also vital for learning the UK culture. Moreover, those with wide social networks in the UK such as friends or family members were able to gain more information and support to fit in the country. They learned from the experiences of others regarding many issues such as childrearing and job-hunting strategies.

Asylum and immigration policies: This study revealed that asylum seekers in the UK are subjected to many restrictions. They are normally not allowed to work until their asylum application is approved. They are only permitted to work after they are granted refugee status

or if they have been waiting for more than a year to get an initial decision on their asylum application (Home Office, 2014). Instead, they are offered minimal basic facilities: an allowance of about £37 a week and accommodation (Home Office, 1998, 1999, 2014). This was a harsh situation to many of the Eritrean migrants because they had left families who depend on them economically. Additionally, these experiences created a sense of marginalisation and social isolation, which affected their level of engagement with the host country.

Moreover, as indicated, asylum seekers are provided accommodation on a no-choice basis (Darling, 2016; Home Office, 1999). They are dispersed around the UK regardless of their geographical preferences, which limits their opportunity to live near friends or family members. The dispersal programme removes refugees from their social networks and, thus, leaves them isolated. The findings of this study supplement the evidence that isolation and other forms of exclusion could be sources of negative emotions including loneliness and depression (Crocker (2015).

My participants had also faced educational restrictions until their application for asylum was approved. This is mainly pertinent to adults, and other asylum seekers who have exhausted their appeal right or committed immigration offences by illegally entering the country via ‘clandestine entry’ (Home Office, 2019a: 14). Finance is another hindrance to those who want to join higher education because asylum seekers are ‘not usually eligible for either the home rate of tuition fees or student finance’ (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service, 2019). Hence, in most cases, asylum seekers spend their time waiting for their application decision. So did the highly educated Eritrean migrants. The asylum and immigration policies

further affected the migrants' family reunion in the UK. Besides, the exit visa restriction in Eritrea contributed to the delayed family reunion.

Cultural factors: In this study, I showed that UK-Eritrea cultural differences affect the socio-cultural integration of migrants. The educational attainment of my participants was significant in helping them to appreciate or tolerate cultural diversity. It served as a basis to understand and embrace cultural diversity and create an atmosphere where everyone can live in peace and harmony (Oxfam, 2015). However, they had to understand the host culture to develop meaningful social interaction and cultural integration (Akerlof & Kranton, 2000). My study fits within the argument that culture is not fundamentally fixed (see Grossberg, 1996; Hall, 1990, 1996). Yet, culture can influence the attitude and behaviour of migrants and the host societies (Spencer-Oatey, 2008). For instance, my study indicated that Eritreans tend to be introvert and shy; and these behaviours influence the way they express themselves, such as their capabilities, in the UK. In other words, they affect their social and professional networking. This supports the finding of Sterckx, Fessehazion and Teklemariam (2018) in the Netherlands; Eritreans value introversion and shyness, making it difficult to establish contact. It further suggests that Eritrean migrants might take a long time to develop new cultural identifications because migrants need to interact with the host society to develop these identifications and navigate between Eritrean and British cultures (see Kim, 1988, 2001).

Demographic factors: My study further concluded that socio-economic characteristics such as gender, marital status and educational qualification have a significant impact on the migrants' integration level to the UK. Most of the women migrants who participated in this research project stated that they shoulder household and job responsibilities. Carrying such responsibilities is often associated with low career advancement and, in some cases, job

interruption (Shah & Shah, 2016). Despite their socio-economic development, some women also experienced abuse and mistreatment even from fellow migrants. My participants noted that these circumstances make women more vulnerable than their men counterparts in the host country.

Moreover, my participants place significant importance on family reunion or formation as a means to gain social support and ease nostalgia. Many also view their socio-cultural integration at the family level (Beaton, Musgrave & Liebl, 2018). They argued that their socio-cultural integration into the UK could not be complete, if their children or partners lag far behind them. Finally, the findings of this study indicated that men have higher authority concerning family formation and relations. Some have retained the Eritrean traditional practices, which favour men over women, in finding a partner and making a decision in family matters (Indira & Vijayalakshmi, 2015; Mezengi, 2005; WeldeKidan, 2015; Yaried, 2013). This corroborates the findings that women are more vulnerable within their destination country, both socially and professionally (see Kawar, 2004; Palumbo & Sciurba, 2018; Ratha, Mohapatra & Scheja, 2011).

8.2.3 How Do Highly Educated Eritrean Migrants Use Their Prior to Migration Educational Qualification to Integrate within the UK?

Various studies pointed out that educational qualification helps migrants to fit in their host country (see Brădăţan & Kulcsár, 2014; Dustmann & Glitz, 2011). My study extends this by describing how highly educated Eritrean migrants use their education to integrate to the UK. Overall, my participants used their before migration education to access basic facilities, learn the UK culture, get a UK qualification, find a job and support their family.

As discussed earlier, English is a key factor related to the migrants' choice of the UK. As the main language, it is important to access or use basic facilities in the UK. It is also central to migrants' learning of British culture and joining HEIs in the country. The highly educated Eritrean migrants used their educational achievement to read about the UK, engage in voluntary activities and socialise with people from different backgrounds. They were also able to pursue further studies to improve their career opportunities in the UK. As discussed in Chapter Six, my participants were not required to attend any English courses or take the English exam to join UK universities. Moreover, their volunteering was vital to gain local work experience and find a job. It provided them with various transferable skills to live and study in the UK.

Table 8.2 Benefits associated with educational qualification obtained before migration

Advantage	Description
Access basic facilities	• Use public services • Express their idea
Understand the UK culture	• Learn about the UK • Communicate with people • Appreciate/tolerate diversity
Get a UK qualification	• Enrol in UK universities • Upgrade their qualification
Find a job	• Volunteer in organisations • Find and apply for a job
Support their family	• Tutor their children • Help other members of their family and community

My study explained that educational attainment is significant not only for the individual migrants. It also contributes to socio-economic and academic life of the migrants' family -- partners and children. In addition to socio-cultural advantages, higher education qualification has a great contribution to migrants' wealth accumulation (Flippen, 2019). My findings further showed the interdependence between different capitals. It indicated that educational capital can be converted into social, cultural and economic capitals (Bourdieu, 1986; Portes, 1998). This supports the idea that migrants' academic qualifications could facilitate their socio-cultural integration process (Fokkema & de Haas, 2011), and advance their job acquisition possibilities (Brădăţan & Kulcsár, 2014).

8.3 Conclusion and Implications

This research explains the socio-cultural integration experiences of highly educated Eritrean migrants with a focus on their educational qualifications obtained before migration. When I started this study, I had familiarised myself with different theories of globalisation, migration and education. However, upon my data collection, I found many diverse ideas which I had not covered. Hence, I read various articles concerning gender studies, psychology and other disciplines to fully comprehend the experiences of my participants. In fact, this study is an evident example that cultural studies are interdisciplinary (Johnson, 1986).

The summary section has highlighted the main findings of my study in relation to the research questions. The findings point out that the asylum process is an important stage between the traumatic journey of migrants to the host country and starting a new life. This is because the asylum stage or early experiences of migrants have a long-term impact on their socio-cultural integration into the host country. In addition, they are significant to better understand the migrants' feelings, perceptions, aspirations and desires. Accordingly, migrants

can be provided with necessary support in case a need arises. Nevertheless, failing to listen to the voices of asylum seekers can make them feel unwelcomed. It can also create integration paradox by causing self-isolation from the host society and, instead, associating with co-nationals who share similar conditions (Wilson-Forsberg, 2015). Besides, as shown in the findings, there is a link between this research and the broader body of work on ethnic minority groups or refugees within and beyond the UK on various issues such as exclusion, deskilling, and marriage and family relations (see Berthoud, 2000; Charsley et al., 2016; Garrido & Codó, 2017: Ismail, 2019; Stewart, 2005). Furthermore, experiences of vulnerability and exclusion are closer among those who live within a particular country (the UK in this case) because they are subjected to the same immigration policy and system.

Moreover, the study indicates that educational achievement helps migrants to interact with the host society. As shown above, this suggests that educational qualification can be converted to social capital which increases the effectiveness of economic and cultural capitals (Bourdieu, 1986; Portes, 1998). Here, my study underlines the connection between education capital and other capitals. At the same time, it highlights the connection between economic and socio-cultural integration. However, this study also emphasises that educational capital might not yield the expected result because other socio-economic characteristics such as gender and ethnicity have significant effect on the socio-cultural integration of migrants. This means that higher education qualification, as a single entity or factor, has limited impact on the life of migrants in their destination countries (Bailey & Mulder, 2017; Fokkema & de Haas, 2011; Moreau & Leathwood, 2006). Furthermore, my findings suggest that socio-cultural integration is a gradual and dynamic process. As indicated above, this is more prevalent among Eritrean migrants who are shy and introvert. Yet, they gradually form a new cultural identity through acculturation and deculturation (Kim, 2001).

Finally, the study also has vital implications for policy and practice. As stated, the delay in the asylum decision increases the migrants' vulnerability while the dispersion policy takes away their opportunity to live near their social networks and, thus, exacerbates their loneliness and psychological distress. These feelings of powerlessness, uncertainty and exclusion affect the migrants' perception and integration towards the host country. Therefore, the Home Office needs to create a system where the asylum seekers can get updated information on their asylum application. It should also consider the migrants' settlement choices within the places identified by the Home Office or refugee support groups. Moreover, the Home Office and refugee support groups should consider collaborating with the migrants' community in the UK to provide effective support systems to the new immigrants.

8.4 Significance of the Study

The study provides a significant contribution to scholarly research and literature in the field. Although various studies had been conducted on migration, I provided critical analyses of migrants' experiences which had been given relatively little attention by researchers (see Diehl et al., 2016; Fokkema & de Haas, 2011). I analysed the stories of 24 highly educated Eritrean migrants to understand their perspectives. Therefore, the study contributes to a better understanding of migrants' socio-cultural experiences in their host country. In addition, it provides a more robust explanation of the connections between migrants' educational qualifications and their socio-cultural integration. In doing so, the study contributes to filling the research gap on the integration of migrants in general and with regard to the context and the participants of the study in particular.

Furthermore, the study reveals not only the benefits and aspirations of the migrants, but also their challenges and strategies to fit in their host country. These issues increase people's awareness about the lives of highly educated migrants and, thus, improve their perception towards migrants. The study also plays a significant role in the advancement of the policy in practice regarding migrants and their integration in the host country. Hence, various stakeholders such as potential migrants and the host society and government can benefit from reading and using the study.

8.5 Suggestions for Further Research

This is a qualitative study based on interpretive phenomenological approach. It has explored the lives of highly educated Eritrean migrants in the UK. However, time and financial limitations confined the study to a particular sample or interviews. The study could have benefited from including observations. However, I did not utilise this method because of the distribution of the participants across different parts of the UK and the absence of many highly educated migrants' social networks. They often join other members of their community in churches and other community events. Besides, the Asmara University Alumni Association is not strong and meets seldomly -- usually not more than twice a year. Moreover, the study explored the effects of educational qualification on socio-cultural integration of the migrants. The absence of any comparator group (e.g. Eritreans without a higher education) may be viewed as another limit to the research. Therefore, further research that focuses on other groups (especially Eritreans without a higher education) and demographic characteristics is required to broaden people's understanding of migration processes. Besides, as data for this study were collected from migrants, similar research that captures the view of other stakeholders including refugee support groups is necessary to increase the credibility of the results (Creswell, 2013).

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Interview Protocol

Introduction: The purpose of the study is to explore the socio-cultural integration experiences of Eritrean migrants who finished their university education in Eritrea, before migrating to the UK. Therefore, this is to kindly request you to answer the following questions which are meant for academic purpose. Your participation is fully voluntary and the information you offer will be kept confidential. You can withdraw at any time and without giving a reason during the research process. If it is okay with you, I will audio record the interview. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

1. Basic information (name, gender, age and educational qualification)
2. Tell me about how you came to be a migrant in the UK
3. Tell me about your story of life in Eritrea
4. Tell me about your journey from Eritrea to the UK
5. Tell me about your story of life in the UK and how did your previous educational attainment has helped you to integrate in the country

Appendix 2. Participant Consent Form

Title of Research Project: Socio-cultural integration of highly educated Eritrean migrants in the UK

Brief Description of Research Project, and What Participation Involves:

This research is being conducted by Samson Maekele Tsegay, a PhD student at the University of Roehampton. The purpose of the study is to explore the socio-cultural integration experiences of Eritrean migrants who finished their university education in Eritrea, before migrating to the UK. The study will be conducted in the UK and 24 Eritreans migrants will be interviewed for data collection. Hence, you will be asked to respond interview questions related to the research and the interview will take approximately one hour. The interview will be audio recorded.

Investigator Contact Details:

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Consent Statement:

I agree to take part in this research, and am aware that I am free to withdraw at any point without giving a reason during the research process, although if I do so I understand that my data might still be used in a collated form. I understand that the information I provide will be treated in confidence by the investigator and that my identity will be protected in the publication of any findings, and that data will be collected and processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and with the University's Data Protection Policy.

Name …….

Signature ……

Date ……

Please note: if you have a concern about any aspect of your participation or any other queries please raise this with the investigator or the Director of Studies. However, if you would like to contact an independent party please contact the Deputy Director of Research.

Director of Studies Contact Details:	**Deputy Director of Research Contact Details:**
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